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BUILDING SERMONS WITH SYMPHONIC THEMES



WILLIAM L. STIDGER, D.D.



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BUILDING SERMONS
WITH SYMPHONIC THEMES

WILLIAM L. STIDGER, D.D.

By WILLIAM L. STIDGER

BUILDING SERMONS WITH SYMPHONIC
THEMES

FINDING GOD IN BOOKS
THAT GOD'S HOUSE MAY BE FILLED

HENRY FORD: THE MAN AND HIS
MOTIVES

ADVENTURES IN HUMANITY
THE PLACE OF BOOKS IN THE LIFE

WE LIVE

THERE ARE SERMONS IN BOOKS
FLASHLIGHTS FROM THE SEVEN SEAS
STANDING ROOM ONLY
SYMPHONIC SERMONS

NEW YORK: GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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BY

WILLIAM L. STIDGER, D.D.



NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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BUILDING SERMONS WITH SYMPHONIC THEMES
— B —
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEDICATED TO
DR. IVAN READ STIDGER,
ALWAYS AN INSPIRATION TO ME FROM THE BEGINNING

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

PAGE

I	<i>Ordained to Eternal Life</i>	11
II	<i>The Day of High Hosannas!</i>	<i>Palms Sunday</i> 27
III	<i>“Dark Is Over, Dawn Is Nigh!”</i>	<i>Easter</i> 46
IV	<i>“Like Ocean’s Thunder on a Sounding Shore”</i>	63
V	<i>The Spiritual Rendezvous of Christmas Day</i>	80
VI	<i>“I Have Found God”</i>	97
VII	<i>I Am Unconquerable!</i>	118
VIII	<i>Not Alone Any More</i>	144
IX	<i>How God Comes to Mankind</i>	168
X	<i>Life’s Worth and Woe</i>	185
XI	<i>God Taking Possession of the Soul</i>	206
XII	<i>“Clearing a Free Way for the Feet of God”</i>	227
XIII	<i>“A Sense of Glad Awakening”</i>	243
XIV	<i>Bo’s’n Bill Was an Atheist Still</i>	254



BUILDING SERMONS
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CHAPTER I

Ordained to Eternal Life

ACTS 13:48: "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

"He heard a voice none else could hear
From centered and from errant sphere."

—Emerson.

When Jenny Lind, the great singer, was in this country she complained of the concert halls; that they did not give her voice enough room; that there was not space enough to unroll her voice; and she even exulted when she found great halls over railroad stations; and even the waiting rooms because of their immensities.

Jenny Lind's voice was ordained to great immensities. To be ordained to great immensities is one of God's gifts for the spacious souls of the world.

God's gift to Jenny Lind—a singing throat, a great organ of sound—ordained her to immensities. That voice found not its habitat in parlors, and

ante-rooms. It needed great space in which to unroll.

A Leviathan needs the sea to wallow in. It would fill up a pond, and it would crowd a Lake Erie. God made the sea for Leviathans.

It is always thrilling to a human soul to stand in great immensities. To stand in the spacious reaches of St. Peter's, and to look into that great dome above is to feel the stir of immensities. And, back of that great immensity is Michael Angelo, a man of a spacious soul. He was ordained to do great things because he had great things in his soul.

No man or woman can look upon a Pacific Ocean, with its seven thousand miles of highway, turbulent, tumbling, tumultuous, storm-tossed waters, without feeling the thrill of immensity. No wonder the woman from an inland town, who was visiting the ocean for the first time, said, upon being asked her first impressions: "It's the first time I ever saw anything that there was enough of."

The Grand Canyon is one of the immensities of this earth, and that is the real reason why a look into this abyss of beauty and wonder thrills our souls. It is because our souls were made for the great immensities.

We like to read about that six-mile-deep hole in the Pacific Ocean just off the coast of Japan. We like to think that a Mt. Everest could be dumped into that hole, and a Woolworth building on top of it, and the two giants be buried hundreds of feet in that watery grave; so deep that ships could pass over the peak of the tower and not be ripped.

One likes to go through the Mammoth Cave. That name even thrills us. It is our size. We like the caliber of that bore. It just suits us. We like to frame our lips to thunder that word Mammoth. But to spend several days traveling through this unending series of underground caverns, one hundred thousand miles of by-ways and tunnels in this cave region of Kentucky, is adventure indeed. Our souls are framed to such. We are at home with the immensities, for we have spacious souls. We have been "Ordained to Eternal Life."

Emerson says:

"The mind delights in immense time; delights in rocks, in metals, in mountain-chains, and in the evidence of vast geological periods which give these; in the age of trees, say of the Sequoias, a few of which will span the whole history of mankind; in the noble toughness and imperishableness of the palm-tree, which thrives under abuse; delights in architecture, whose building lasts so long—'a house,' says Ruskin, 'is not in its prime until it is five hundred years old,'—and here are the pyramids which have as many thousands, and cromlechs and earth-mounds much older than these."

These gigantic physical things inspire great rhapsodies in the heart of mankind, from the humblest to the loftiest; because it might be said of man, when he is in the presence of these immensities:

"He heard a voice none else could hear
From centered and from errant sphere."

Because he is "Ordained to eternal life."

THE BIBLE IS A BOOK OF IMMENSITIES FOR
SPACIOUS SOULS

The story of creation is a story of great spaciousness. It took the whole universe as a setting for creation. Sky, earth, sea, all space was needed. The Book of Genesis is a spacious thing because it deals with the immensities of the creation of the earth, the sea, the sky, the things that fly in the sky, the things that swim in the sea, the things that live on the earth—aye, even to that colossal-brained thing, rising to his feet, looking spacious things in the eyes, man himself: the sky, the storms, the stars, God and Eternity. When God made man in his own image in that colossal story of the first dawning, he made a spacious soul, fit to look into the immensities of life; the greatest of which are God and Eternity.

In fact the Bible is a book of Immensities.

The story of the Exodus of the children of Israel is a Racial Movement. When you get an entire race of people up and moving that is a thing of immensities. We get some idea of the bigness of this racial movement started by Moses when we see that gigantic motion picture called, "The Ten Commandments." When we see Moses up on Sinai, receiving the commandments, see the lightning shrieking through the sky, bombarding these great cliffs of stone with moral tenets, there is a suggestion of these immensities of life that always fit in with the spaciousness of the human soul, and its Divine Father. When we get to dealing with the story of

Creation, with Time, with skies, with seas, with earth, with stars, with Racial Movements, and chronicles of people we are dealing with the immensities—and that is the kind of stuff with which the Bible is filled from cover to cover. It is the Book of Immensities, written for the spacious souls of Mankind.

The Holy Land is a little toy-land; small in proportions, miniature in size, smaller than Rhode Island, but out of its limited borders came the hope of the world, the Universal Dream of mankind. And that is an immense thing, which dominates the earth and the future.

The great movements of the Bible, the great dramas, needed all out-of-doors for a setting. Creation, Exodus, the Flood, the Tower of Babel, the Whirlwind, Storm, Prairie Fire and Earthquake all of an afternoon; Job, the world's greatest drama of human life, the Book of Revelation, the Life of Jesus the carpenter of Nazareth; there's something infinitely spacious about them all. They require great immensities for a setting. The Bible is a book of such immensities that we are appalled by them. They are the great immensities for the spacious souls, the souls, "Ordained to eternal life."

MAN'S MIND IS BUILT FOR SPACIOUS THINGS

He responds to spaciousness; he is framed for immensities; he is ordained to Eternity.

Thomas Carlyle said once, as he stood on the seashore at Chelsea, with his black cape flying in

the winds, and his gray hair tossed and sea-wet; as he looked, in imagination back into the past, as far as creation; and as he projected his soul out beyond the Dog-star, and as he delved with his keen eyes into the bowels of the earth:

“Man! Stands he not at the center of immensities, at the conflux of Eternities?”

Carlyle knew that man was “Ordained for Eternity.”

He was one who stood, and:

“He heard a voice none else could hear
From centered and from errant sphere.”

I have noticed frequently that great men, as Emerson says, do not shine in private conversation, or in a small room, but give them a great hall, and a great occasion, and they rise like giants. To quote the exact words of Emerson, I add: “But give such a man commanding occasion, and the inspiration of a great multitude and he surprises by new and unlooked for powers.”

Then he adds a graphic figure: “Before he was out of place and as unfitted as a cannon in a parlor.”

But when he stands naked in a prize ring, or broad breasting the breakers of an angry sea, in the armour of a Life Guard; or when he stands at bat, with a great club in his hands, or when he stands before an audience of twenty-five thousand people on the top of a Mt. Rubedeau, he is at home, and in his element, like a lion in the desert or a Leviathan in the sea. The immensities befit him.

When you see him in his element, with something big enough to do, and an environment big enough to house him, and a stage large and ample enough to stride and gesture on; you feel about him as Emerson says of Guizot:

“What Guizot learned this morning he has the air of having known from all eternity.”

Why?

Answer: Because some men are molded in the mold of a mountain canyon, breathed upon by the cool winds of the sea, cast forth by an earthquake, and the mold destroyed by a volcano, sent by God for that specific purpose. For he is, “Ordained for Eternity”; and

“He heard a voice none else could hear
From centered and from errant sphere.”

Some wise person has said:

“If your eye is on the Eternal, your intellect will grow.”

That exactly sums up for me the thought of this part of my sermon. That is exactly why man's mind grows; because man's mind is always, consciously, or sub-consciously, on the Eternal. We think the Eternal, we dream the Eternal, we pray with the Eternal in our hearts and on our lips, we love for the Eternal, we plan for the Eternal, we act as if we were of the Eternal, and finally, we lie down and die, with great expectations that we shall awake sweeping out into the Eternal on the wings of the “Winds before the dawn.”

No wonder man's intellect grows so rapidly. No wonder his, which was an animal mind a few short æons ago, is now a walking creature, an upright being, that can look God, the skies and the stars of dawn in the eyes; man, "Ordained to the Eternal."

Man is ordained for Immortal Life and consequently he cannot be content with sin, or pettiness, or beastliness.

A pig prefers mud to wallow in. Give him a nice clean stream, and, across the road from that crystal stream a muddy swamp, and he will select the swamp if he has the choice. Why? Because he is a pig. A pig likes mud. But not a man.

He cannot be content with mud and slime. He can stand so much of it, and then, like the Prodigal Son—he gets sick of the pigs and pig-life, and pig food, and leaves the pig-stye and goes back to his father.

And that is a glorious day, when a man, recognizing his divinity, leaves the pigs and goes back to his father's house and to love and to clean beds, and clean skies, and clean living, and clean immensities where white stars glow.

A man may think for a time that he can be satisfied with mud, and materialism, but he never can. He may think that the business of amassing a fortune will satisfy his soul, but he is only following a Will-o'-the-Wisp, for the making of money will never satisfy his soul.

A man may think that following the ways of the world will satisfy him; and, for a time, it may—but not forever.

Why? Because a man is immortal. He is framed for the immensities; he is built for spacious skies. He is "Ordained to Eternal Life."

That is why a human soul can never be happy in pettiness and sin. He is built too big for sin. It is not his natural habitat. It is not his happy environment. There is something in a human soul which shrinks at impurity, which shudders at deceit; which is repelled by dishonor; which despises beastliness. We have climbed away from beastliness, and even though we fall back into it; and even though the distance is not far that we have climbed, we still instinctively feel that, to go back, is a terrible mistake. We shudder at that lapse.

Why? Because we are born and "Ordained to Eternal Life."

And it is for that same reason that we human beings respond so beautifully and so quickly to the big things of earth and life.

When we allow ourselves to go to a Symphony, conducted by a Gabrilowitsch, we find our souls responding with alertness to the Symphony. We love fine music. No matter how uncultured we may be, we human beings respond to the big and the beautiful in music.

The art galleries of Europe are filled constantly with the common, poor of Europe. They know and love the gigantic things of the masters. Our human hearts always go out to things that are truly great, and touched with grandeur.

I have watched audiences all over the world. I have studied the psychology of audiences. They

will invariably respond to great thoughts quicker than they will respond to petty things. An audience made up of all types of people in a theater, in a church, in an out-of-doors place, will always and immediately recognize the sublime, the beautiful, the colossal, in thought, word, deed, art, music, poetry.

An audience will be subdued to silence, which is the "Perfect Tribute" in the face of something worthy of that silence. Their souls immediately go out to a great thought as a swimmer runs to meet the sea. They paid Lincoln the unconscious tribute of silence, following his Gettysburg address, for the simple reason that their souls recognized a great utterance in these simple words. They were moved to silence in spite of themselves. That always occurs in a public audience.

When the speaker has something great to say, people will listen. When he has something puny to offer, they are restless. Men will always respond in a public audience to spacious things, and to great immensities.

Why? Because they have been "Ordained to Eternal Life," long ago.

There is something eternal in them; something that fits in with spacious things; something that has its habitat only in the immensities. The soul belongs there. It knows not why or how, but it belongs in that country. That is what Bishop Quayle calls "the soul's appropriate country."

The same thing which makes us all shun sin; that strange, instinctive thing that makes us unsatisfied

with the low and the mean; that strangely gripping thing which makes us always want to climb out of the pit and upward, is the same instinctive thing which makes our souls leap the lapse of ages to greet the great and the sublime.

CHRIST'S LIFE WAS FILLED WITH SPACIOUS THINGS

His birth was a spacious thing amid spacious settings.

He had the sky as a dome for his birthplace.

He had an angel choir to serenade his event into life, and he had a star to guide him to the earth and to announce his coming. His birth had to do with the immensities of time and space.

He lived and walked, and died in spacious settings, for he lived in the out-of-doors all his days. He was seldom indoors. He loved the mountains, and the hanging stars. He loved the rugged trails, and he crooned like a stream of prayer through the valleys. He prayed at nights on mountain-tops because he liked to hear answer from the "errant spheres."

He loafed with fisherfolk beside blue Galilee.

He was cramped indoors, and the only spectacular time he went into the Temple to preach he felt so suffocated and so bound-in that he bulged out the giant shoulders of his wrath and literally rent the walls of that Temple apart so that all the world could see its inner filth and cesspools.

Jesus was an out-of-doors man, partly by preference but mostly by pre-ordination. God had such

things for Jesus to do, that he needs must have all the out-of-doors to do them in. Such was his appropriate setting.

He taught of a spacious Kingdom, and lifted religion to new immensities. He gave religion and the Kingdom, about which he talked, an international scope.

Some prophet whose name I have now forgotten said something that gives him a right to be forgotten. One can afford to be forgotten if he leaves such thoughts behind as his immortality in the hearts of men:

“Jesus explained nothing, but the influence of Him took people out of time, and they felt Eternal. A great integrity makes us Immortal!”

Yes, people were taken out of Time by Jesus and they felt Eternal.

Why did Jesus do this noble thing?

Because he knew that human beings were by God, His Father

“Ordained to Eternal Life.”

“And how did Jesus know to do this thing?”

Answer:

“He heard a voice none else could hear
From centered and from errant sphere.”

CHRIST'S TEACHINGS WERE SPACIOUS

“Come up higher” seems to be the slogan of his spiritual message.

He is calling us to more spacious living and to greater immensities of thought.

God himself gave Christ in that spirit:
“For God so loved the WORLD—that He gave
His only begotten Son—”

There was no small provincialism about that idea. There was nothing puny in God’s mind. It was “The World” that interested him—that tugged at his heartstrings. There is a world-note in all of God’s dealings with humankind. Let the one hundred per centers take no comfort out of this; and those who would cut out of civilization’s benefits those of another color, or curve of cheek bone, or kink of hair. God’s son was given for “the world.”

Then Jesus in turn immediately trumpeted to the world his meaning and his message when he said, “I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly.”

“Life” and “Abundance” are words that suggest great immensities, and spacious things of the soul; such as had never thrilled humanity’s hope heretofore. Here was a man talking, who knew that man was “Ordained for Eternity.”

Christ, too, talked clearly and positively of a “Spiritual” Kingdom, and not of a “Material” Kingdom. He was dealing in new immensities then. He was lifting his world into more spacious skies of the soul. He talked about a Spiritual Kingdom, as confidently, and as unconsciously, as most men talk of England, Germany, Russia and the United States—and more so. He was dealing in new immensities, in things Eternal. He had no time to waste in bitterness, in revenge, in defending his personal dignity. He had no time for “getting back”

at people and “saving his face.” He had no time to hate. He knew, with my dear friend, Edwin Markham, that there is no time for hate:

“There is no time for hate, O wasteful friend;
Put away hate until the ages end.
Have you an ancient wound? Forget the wrong . . .
Out in my West a forest, loud with song
Towers high and green over a field of snow,
Over a glacier buried far below.”

Men who have learned their Divine kinship; that they have been, from the beginning, if they wish to accept this inheritance, “Ordained for Eternity”; men who live in these spacious soul-skies; men who inhabit these immensities, know that hate is such a puny thing, that revenge is so senseless and useless, that pettiness is so puny, that they haven’t time for such. They live in the lofty regions:

“As some tall cliff that lifts its mighty form
Swells from the vale and mid-way leaves the storm,
While ’round its breast, the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head!”

Such are these men of the Great Immensities; these men “Ordained for Eternal Life.”

And almost the last word that Jesus left, was like unto the words spoken of His own coming to the earth. He told His disciples to go: “Unto all the world, and preach.”

There was nothing local or provincial about that command!

There was no racial intolerance in that message. And finally, he brought the thought of Immortality to earth.

The Egyptians did not have it. The Babylonians were afraid of it. The Hebrews were timid about it. But Jesus talked it, taught it, brought it, and proved it on Easter morning long ago.

He came that we might have Eternal Life. He came that we might know, to the full, that we were "Ordained for Eternal Life"—we who would accept it.

An Arabian caliph who died as far back as 845, hoped and dreamed, and prayed in the darkness of uncertainty:

"O thou whose Kingdom never passes, pity one whose dignity is so transient!"

In his Essay on "Immortality" Emerson tells of two of his friends who were in the United States Congress. Both were men of great distinction, men of intellect, and they took an active part in the life of their day and generation.

These two friends in Congress, in addition to attending well to their duties, often got together to talk over the things of earth and immortality. When one of them left Congress the two of them were separated for twenty-five years. Then they saw each other through open doors, at a distance, in a crowded reception room at the President's house in Washington.

Slowly they advanced toward each other, as fast as they could make their way through the great crowd of brilliant people, until, at last, they came

face to face—took hands, said nothing, but shook hands long and cordially.

At last his friend said, “Any light, Albert?”

“None!” said Albert. “Any light, Lewis?”

“None!” said Lewis, and they parted, never to meet again, as the crowd swerved around them and closed in, and separated them.

It was a sad parting.

But there is light.

And we cry out this day: “Any light, God?”

And the answer comes back through the gloom, “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

“Any light, friend?”

Answer: “Yes. Light Eternal! Light through Jesus Christ; he who came that we might have light and life abundant, and that we might dwell in the Immensities; coming with the message, “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me,” into soul spaciousness forever.

Jesus knew that we humans were “Ordained to Eternal Life.”

How did he know?

He knew because:

“He heard a voice none else could hear
From centered and from errant sphere.”

CHAPTER II

The Day of High Hosannas!

MATTHEW 21:9: "Hosanna to the son of David!

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the Highest!"

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

"I will shout, I will sing,
I will cry from the housetops this marvelous
thing!"

—*Angela Morgan.*

Here is a day of unbridled enthusiasm.
Here was a dawn when all the world rejoiced
and shouted Hosannas!

(Thank God that there are things in this poor, miserable, old world worth shouting over.) Thank God also that we have something left in us that knows how to shout. That there are things worth shouting over, and that we have not lost the art of shouting is a glorious thought to have blustering through our souls.

The Mammoth Cave fish have lost their eyes because there is nothing left to see, and they have no need of eyes and their eyes die through non-use. That that has not happened to our souls is a hilarious thing to talk about; that our ability to enthuse and shout is not dead; that we still have something to

shout over and to cry Hosannas over is a thing to send a thrill of rapture through the framework of the heart!

An *Æolian Harp* will be mute until there is something to sing about. Pine trees are mute until there is something to sing over. Great Sequoias are silent as the tomb until there is something to bluster about. Even the grasses have no music in them until the winds come along and make music through their harp strings. When the wind comes, either a gentle breeze, a tempest at noonday, or a blustering, blundering night storm, it makes something to sing over and to thunder about and to shout over. Then the grasses, the Pine trees, the Sequoia trees, the canyons, and the *Æolian Harps* set up a mighty music on the earth—because there is something to make music over. There is the wind in the trees. There is something to shout over and to be glad about, friends of all beautiful things.

But a dead and listless *Æolian Harp* which has lost its ability to make music—that would be a sad thing to contemplate.

And also a dead and listless soul. That would be a sad thing to think about. A soul that has lost the ability to enthuse, to shout, to sing, to be happy over something—is the saddest thing in Christendom in the eyes of man, of God, and the Angels in Heaven.

And, one of the most terrible things that we poor grown-ups do is to curb the enthusiasm of Childhood and Youth, and to put a check on the ability to shout which is a gift of Childhood. One of the reasons

why Jesus said that the qualification for entering the Kingdom of God was to become as a little child, was because he wanted us to have the simple enthusiasm of a child in our soul.

The other day a preacher was appraising Dr. Fosdick and he spoke most graciously about him. Then, unwilling to go the whole way, he felt that he ought to qualify what he said, and he admitted that, to his mind, Dr. Fosdick had two serious handicaps: one was that he had not thought deeply, and the other was that he had not felt deeply, or that he had not suffered deeply. There is a certain type of preacher who cannot go sled-length to save his soul in his appreciation of another minister. He must stick in the barbs of qualifications. He must always come to a statement that the man is all right, "But."

Give me the man who goes sled-length; the man who, in utter abandonment, gives himself over to unselfish, whole-hearted enthusiasm on occasions. I will trust that man's soul further in all things if I know that he can throw himself without reservation into enthusiasm over something. He will be like Carlyle's man who knew how to laugh: "That man cannot be wholly bad."

And Jesus evidently enjoyed the enthusiasm of this crowd that welcomed him into Jerusalem. Some of the cynics, some of the carefully cautious, some of the old ladies who were present, offered a protest to Jesus. They were the Pharisees. There are always some Pharisees present; who know no joy in life themselves and always object when others have joy, loyalty, love and enthusiasm. They are

the kill-joys of life. They are always present. Sometimes it is a problem as to what to do with them. Life is glorious with sunshine, joy, gladness and song, when along comes a kill-joy who must needs interject some wise thought and opinion, some reservation, some nicely balanced criticism, some sit-on-the-fence-and-prod opinion. Jesus knew what to do with them, and there has been no better way suggested. And Jesus said to the Pharisees, who tried to stop all of this shouting, in answer to their plaint:

PHARISEES: "Master, rebuke Thy disciples; they make Thee one even with God!"

JESUS: "If these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out!"

THERE WERE SOME THINGS THAT GLORIOUS DAY TO SHOUT OVER

First, there was the Dawn.

It was a glorious dawning. Jesus and His disciples had spent the night on the Mount of Olives. The dawn came up with that glorious beauty of Oriental worlds. I shall never forget such a dawn in the Philippines. There is that cool freshness, which is a contrast with the tropical heat of the day which it is impossible to duplicate in the Temperate zone. The dew is dripping from the palm trees. The night seems to have washed the world as clean as a mother washes her child's face. The sound of running water in the stillness suggests the singing of angels in Paradise. The sun rises in splendid

glory. Kipling caught the spirit of an Oriental sunrise in that immortal phrase:

“When the dawn comes up like thunder
Outer China 'cross the bay!”

The dawn is always a thing to rejoice over and to be glad over and to shout over. The dawn gets into one's blood in a strange way.

The dawn of day is a supreme adventure any place.

I have watched day dawn from a dozen corners of the earth. They are all splendid memories.

I have watched day dawn on the Pacific Ocean and on the Atlantic. It is always a wonderful adventure to see the day dawn on the ocean. The heralds of approaching day come up out of the sea-plain first, crimson, gold and amber. Then the sky turns to rose, and it looks as if God was pouring all of the rose petals of the world into that Rose Sea, and before you know it the sky is Rose, the sea is Rose, the waves are Rose-tipped, and you are in a world of Roses everywhere. Even the birds have a Rose tint on their white wings.

I remember a dawn on a wintry country road, when I was a country preacher and was driving to catch an early morning train back to college. The snow crusted under foot. The sleigh bells made sweet music on the zero winter air. The sun came up as though out of a great open fireplace. That dawn suddenly set a fire burning in the hearth of the world—the eastern horizon, and for ten miles

we traveled into that glowing fire of dawn, with the red flames shooting up the sky-chimney, and it warmed our cheeks, and our hearts in a never-to-be-forgotten memory.

There was the first dawn I ever saw in California. The train had climbed the mountain ranges from Reno and had slid down into the Sacramento Valley. It was my first trip to California and I was going there to take my first little church. This dawning was to open up a new era in my life; an era that was to last for six years, with adventure, love, friendships, success, hope, work, play, sorrow. I had heard of California sunshine, and this dawn fulfilled every prophecy. The train stopped at Sacramento in that early dawning. There was a touch of mountain air blowing from snow-covered peaks, but there was a great, bold, glowing sun, which sent a thrill of warmth through the air. Everywhere it seemed that the world was painted white for the occasion. It seemed to me that the glorious sunshine could not be the regular thing. It was so wonderful, that I could not believe my own senses. But I later learned that that was the usual thing. That day dawn is one of the most memorable of all my life.

Last summer I experienced a day dawning on the Atlantic Ocean. It was a weird, strange dawning. We were not like two boy friends in the cabin who stayed up nearly every night until the wee small hours. On one occasion one of these boys had been drinking a little too much. When he came in, he

looked out of the porthole of his cabin and got greatly excited. There were strange lights in the sky. Streaks of red, gold and rose everywhere. He roused the whole cabin with the cry: "Wake up! There's something unusual happening. There are strange lights in the sky! It may be the northern lights!" He was visibly excited. He felt that he had made a great discovery.

When his companions awoke they found that it was just the dawn coming up, and that he had been up so late that he had discovered the dawn of a new day and it was so beautiful and so unusual that he was all excited about it and thought he had made some new discovery.

Up on deck a small group of us had been waiting for that same dawn with great eagerness. Off to the north a dozen great icebergs gleamed in the rose-colored dawn until the green and white turned to rose, and these splendid mountains of nature—these great El Capitans of ice, these Woolworth Towers of immaculate purity—had suddenly turned to gold, and finally to a great, glorious, shouting, pæan of rose beauty.

The other day I was in the famous Hill Brothers Rose Gardens in Richmond, Indiana. I looked upon a hundred thousand red roses all in blossom at one time, in one great glass garden a mile long. The beauty of scent and color was almost overpowering. It lifted one up until he felt that he was in some great heavenly glacial meadow close to the skies alone with God.

So looked that great glacial dawning, that dawning of rose-colored icebergs; that dawning of beauty and wonderment on the Atlantic this summer.

Any dawning is an adventure.

Every dawning is an unfulfilled promise.

To the soul that is pure, the heart that is holy, every dawning is an adventure for God; and the dawning of Palm Sunday found Jesus on the Mount of Olives at sunrise looking down upon that city which he loved so much; that city over which he had wept and cried out:

“Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered Thee under my wings as a mother hen gathers her chickens.”

Any dawning is enough to make a soul shout upon the hills.

To look upon a dawning any time one feels like crying out:

“I WILL SHOUT, I WILL SING,
I WILL CRY FROM THE HOSETOPS THIS MARVELOUS
THING !”

Second, it was spring.

Spring is enough to fill any soul with shouting.

Spring in the Tropics is as beautiful in its way as spring in the Temperate Zone. There is a thrill of new life shooting through the earth.

The sap streams are running in every tree. The palm is turning a fresher green. The date palm is shooting forth new buds.

The streams themselves are running full of moun-

tain water. The midsummer in the Oriental world is nothing to rejoice over. The roads are dusty, the grass is dead, the hills are sere and brown. The trees are dusty and dead looking. The land is parched and panting. But this is spring—the glorious miracle of spring; that glorious miracle over which John Drinkwater sings in “The Miracle”:

“Come, sweetheart, listen, for I have a thing
Most wonderful to tell you—news of spring.

Far down the fields to-day I saw her pass—
The spring—her feet went shining through the grass.

She touched the ragged hedgerows—I have seen
Her finger-prints, most delicately green.

And she has whispered to the crocus leaves,
And to the garrulous sparrows in the eaves.

Swiftly she passed and shyly, and her fair
Young face was hidden in her cloudy hair.

She would not stay, her season is not yet,
But she has reawakened and has set

The sap of all the world astir, and rent
Once more the shadows of our discontent.

Triumphant news—a miracle I sing
The everlasting miracle of spring.”

New life is in the air. The flowers are blossoming on every hill, and beside every stream. The meadows are green with new grass. Life, life, life everywhere—the glorious Miracle of Spring—new

every year; glorious every winter-end. There was spring to rejoice over and be glad. Here was a shouting matter even if there was nothing else. Spring is the present tense NOW—when we celebrate Palm Sunday—and the waving palms, and the beautiful flowers are symbols that spring is in the Present Tense with us this glorious Sabbath Day in the church of Christ. There is that to shout over on Palm Sunday:

“I will shout, I will sing,
I will cry from the housetops this marvelous
thing!”

“Hosanna to the son of David; blessed is spring, that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

Third, there was the joy of Prophecy fulfilled. That was no small thing in the joys of Jesus on that glorious day.

We usually pass that incident over lightly as if it matters little in the story, but to discriminating folk it matters much. It is one of the prophecies fulfilled.

Matthew thinks much of the importance of this incident in the story; this incident of the ass that was waiting for Jesus; waiting to take its humble part in the destined drama of the greatest Sovereign on earth; waiting in the wings of the world’s greatest theater; waiting for that stupendous scene of the triumphal entry; waiting to fulfill a Prophecy.

“All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, saying:

“Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.’”

Jesus on that dawning had sent his disciples into the little village of Bethpage. This was a village just outside of Jerusalem which gained its livelihood by sending figs to the markets in the great city of Jerusalem.

Peter went to this village as directed by Jesus. It would have been just like that foolish Peter to keep saying to himself all the way into the village: “There may be an ass and a colt there, but I have my doubts. We may get that ass and colt away, if it IS there, without getting into trouble with the owner—but, secretly, I have my doubts.”

That is what I like about Peter. He has his doubts. In other words, he is human. But he went just the same. He acted as if it was all coming about just as Jesus said it was and it did.

Some poor miserable fellow said to Mr. Moody, “I don’t believe there is a God, and I don’t believe in the Bible promises—and I don’t believe—”

Mr. Moody said: “But will you act as if you believe in God; and will you act as if there is a God, and will you act as if you believe in the promises?”

The man said that he would, and he came into a glorious experience just as Peter did that dawning.

Peter and his friends went down into the village and back of one of the humble houses in that village was a stable-yard, and tethered to the door was an ass with a fine white colt. As Peter took the ass a man ran out.

“What doest thou with my colt?” he asked.

“The Lord hath need of him,” said Peter.

“Who is the Lord?”

“Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God.”

“Take him, and peace go with you.”

As the disciples walked away with the colt one of them said to Peter:

“Hath not the prophet spoken truly, Peter?”

There was cause for rejoicing that the prophecy had been fulfilled. The plan had worked. The fulfillment of this prophecy was one additional proof that there was a “God in Israel.” It was one additional proof that the world did not run by chance; that there was a Divine Intelligence back of the world; that God was sitting in the “Shadows keeping watch above his own.”

When we catch the full import of this particular part of the Palm Sunday story we feel a sense of thrill and exuberance. “I told you so! I told you so! I told you so! I knew that God would not fail his own; that he would not go back on us! He did it! He did it! He did it just as he said he would!”

“I will shout, I will sing,

I will cry from the housetops this marvelous thing!”

“Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

Fourth, there was the acclamation of the people! That is always a glorious thing.

To be loved and acclaimed by people, every-day,

common people, is one of the chief satisfactions of life to one who loves people. Jesus was such an one. "The common people heard him gladly" because he loved the common people.

Therefore it was a supreme satisfaction to Jesus to have this acclamation of the people.

First he was happy that the little children were in that glorious crowd which lined the streets of Jerusalem as he entered, riding on the ass. He was glad for the shrill treble shouts of the little children. I think that any acclamation without the little children would have sounded hollow and unbeautiful to Jesus. The songs and shoutings of the children made that day complete.

Then he was happy because he saw young people in that acclaiming throng; youth with the first flush of manhood; youth with all of its ideals and dreams; its aspiring hopes; its quick recognition of a hero; its complete abandonment, without reservation, in loyalty to a leader. That crowd of young men and women lining the streets of Jerusalem pleased Jesus. He would have been lonely without that part of the crowd on that glorious day. His victory would have been less complete, then, as now, without Youth being there.

He knew too that the dreamers and idealists were there—all of them; to the last man. The dreamers and idealists had been hearing for these many years of a Savior, a Messiah, a Christ of God, who was to come to lead them into a new Kingdom. The idealists are always on the alert for leaders. They are the advance scouts of humanity who are always go-

ing out ahead scanning the far horizons for the dreams, the visions, the spiritual leaders. They always recognize spiritual leadership first. The idealists were there and Jesus saw by the light in their eyes who they were, as they lined the streets and shouted from the housetops. It is a glorious thing to be welcomed by the dreamers, and the idealists, and the seers of vision.

I like to speak before preachers better than any other audience on earth.

I would rather address an audience of preachers than a Lyceum crowd, a Chautauqua crowd, a noon-day lunch crowd or an ordinary church crowd. The preachers are idealists—for the most part—and they know what you are driving at, and they respond to truth, and dream and vision quicker than anybody else on the face of the earth. They are idealists.

And it was a glorious matter to Jesus that among those who welcomed him shone the bright eyes of the idealists and dreamers.

This was a shouting matter; that the common people, the children, youth and the idealists were in that welcoming throng who gave him the Triumphal Entry on that glorious Sabbath morning.

He must have cried in his soul, and they must have sung in their hearts, these dreamers:

“I will shout, I will sing,
I will cry from the housetops this marvelous
thing!”

“Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

Fifth, it was a soul triumph for Jesus.

Jesus knew that entering Jerusalem meant Death! But, as the Bible says in spite of this he "steadfastly set his face toward Jerusalem!"

At that moment Jesus conquered his human frailties and fears. That Triumphal Entry was a victorious event in many ways. It was a victory of popularity. He had won the hearts of the people. He had been accepted as the Messiah, the Savior, even though they did not know just what kind of a Savior he was. That was an external victory and triumph.

But the great triumph of that day was the triumph within. He was actually afraid of Jerusalem. He knew that Jerusalem was ready to kill him, but he was ready to be killed. That was his Father's plan. Therefore he won a tremendous victory when he started down from the Mt. of Olives that day and entered Jerusalem.

What man who deals with people does not know that they who acclaim him to-day will accuse him to-morrow; that they who shout praises after him to-day will shout imprecations after him to-morrow. A football coach is a hero as long as the team wins and a craven when the team loses. Baseball heroes come and go. Even preachers are not immune to this fluttering loyalty of humanity. Therefore the man is wise who understands it, and does his duty in spite of it. Jesus knew what he faced in Jerusalem and yet, unafraid, he gave the command that started the procession in motion; that procession which was finally to end on Calvary Hill a few days later. That was a glorious victory for Jesus. That was

the most worthwhile victory because it was a victory of the soul, and of the spirit. There is always cause for shouting over a spiritual victory when it comes, and to-day we shout our joy aloud because Jesus won this spiritual victory on Palm Sunday.

There is a story told of a young soldier in Cromwell's army who had been condemned to die. He was in love with a beautiful girl. She had plead for his life, even going to Cromwell himself.

Cromwell ordered that the execution should take place that night when the curfew sounded.

Curfew was at sunset and all was ready and the officers waited.

But the bell did not ring. Only one person knew why it did not ring.

The young girl, wild with anxiety for her sweetheart, had climbed to the top of the bell-tower and had seized the tongue of the bell.

The old sexton was deaf. That night when he tugged at the bell rope he thought it was heavier than usual, but swung on with all his might. He little knew that he was swinging out over a dizzy height the fair form of a beautiful girl, and that no sound was coming from his bell-tower. Every swing of that great bell clapper swung her out of the open window. The heavy iron cut her hands. But in the desperation of love she swung.

The sexton went away, and the girl hurried to the place of execution.

Cromwell himself was there, waiting, and he was just demanding to know why the bell had not rung—

“And her brow
Lately white with sorrow, glows
With hope and courage now.
At his feet she told her story,
Showed her hands all bruised and torn,
And her young face, still haggard
With the anguish it had worn,
Touched his heart with sudden pity,
Lit his eyes with misty light—
‘Go; your lover lives,’ cried Cromwell;
‘Curfew shall not ring to-night!’”

When we hear that phrase—hereafter forever—we shall know where it originated and our hearts shall shout aloud at the sight of such love and such sacrifice. This was a Victory of Love! This was soul triumph. Such is always a glorious thing to witness:

“I will shout, I will sing,
I will cry from the housetops this marvelous
thing!”

One day in Scotland, according to a legend that I heard this summer in Edinburgh, an eagle carried away a tiny infant.

The whole village was aroused, and followed the eagle to its lair on a lofty cliff.

A sailor, rugged of arm and shoulder, attempted to climb to that height but failed.

A Scotch Highlander, used to rugged mountain climbing, attempted to reach the eagle’s nest but fell to the bottom of the cliff.

Then came a poor peasant woman. She started

up that cliff, one foot after the other, with what looked like an infinite wisdom, precision and certainty.

Those below watched this peasant woman with fear and trembling. It did not seem possible for her to do it, but at last she reached the top of that cliff, and lifting the baby tenderly to her breast started. At last she stepped to safety amid the shouts of the people.

Why did that peasant woman succeed when the strong sailor and the rugged Highlander had failed?

Answer: She was the mother of that baby.

It is a glorious thing to see the triumph of love.

It is a glorious thing to see Jesus Christ face death in Jerusalem because he so loved the world that he was willing to take the first step towards Calvary. He knew that he was walking into a trap. Jerusalem was that trap of death. But he went. Love was victorious! His soul was triumphant:

"I will shout, I will sing,
I will cry from the housetops this glorious thing!"

When Napoleon with his army of invasion lay at Boulogne, an English sailor who had been captured tried to escape on a little raft he had patched together. When Napoleon heard of this attempt to escape he had the sailor brought before him, and asked him if he really meant to attempt to cross the channel on that frail raft.

The answer came: "Yes, and if you will let me, I am still willing to try."

"You must have a sweetheart whom you are anxious to see."

"No!" said the sailor. "I only wish to see my mother who is old and infirm."

"And you shall see her," said Napoleon, "And take her this money, for she must be a good mother who has a son who loves her so much."

That, too, was a triumph of love over death and danger.

In that spirit, Jesus went into Jerusalem, embarked on that sea of triumph in the frail bark of popularity, knowing that at the other side of that channel was Calvary's Cross; on the other side of that channel was Golgotha, beyond Jerusalem, and suffering and death.

But he knew it was his Father's plan; and he loved the world so much that he conquered fear and rode to death on that white ass, through triumph to death on one great tremendous spiritual victory:

"I will shout, I will sing,
I will cry from the housetops this marvelous
thing!"

Easter

CHAPTER III

“Dark Is Over, Dawn Is Nigh!”

II PETER 1:19: “Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”

MATTHEW 28:1: “In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn.”

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

“Let the world awake and cry,
‘Dark is over, dawn is nigh;
Spring has come and winter fled,
Christ has risen from the dead.’”

—*Studdert Kennedy.*

“He’s the Lily of the Valley,
He’s the bright and morning star,
He’s the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.”

So the old familiar hymn sings through our souls this Easter time, and memories olden and memories golden come sweeping back, until the tears flood our souls at the recollections that arise when these words come. We feel as if we should like to sing those lines over and over; that Christ is the Lily of the Valley and the bright and morning star.

Those who know the stars know the beauty and the wonder of the Day Star; the prelude to dawn; the herald of morning; the Messenger of Hope to all weary Night Workers, Night Watchers, Night

Nurses—mothers, lovers, worn, torn souls—waiting, hurting, weeping, sorrowing—until the Day Star shines and the day dawns.

Jesus loved the dawning. If you will go through the Bible you will find that many of his most impressive miracles and most beautiful incidents happen at the dawning. I remember some of them. I shall speak of them a little later. I hold these things, as a child holds his candy, to partake of their sweets later. It is so beautiful to think about them, and have them later.

And perhaps the reason that Jesus loved the dawning was because he inherited the traditions of his ancestry, the Hebrew race. And it was also, perhaps, because he loved that great library, the Old Testament, and because he heard Poet David sing, and knew that he who watched the sheep had seen so many dawns that could never be seen and not sung about; and it was because he had lived and saturated his soul with the dawnings of his native land that he was a man of dawn and dawnings everlasting.

THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS A BOOK OF DAWNINGS

I suppose that any one with imagination and with even a little poetry in his heart might have a right to say that the world began in a dawning of creation; that the entire story of creation was the story of a dawning; that when God said, “Let there be light,” he was scribbling across the pages of immortal time the first story of a dawning on earth.

No wonder the Bible is beautiful with Dawn, no wonder it is the book of Dawnings, and daybreaks, and beginnings; for it began with a great dawning, the dawning of the world!

It would be a beautiful study for a man with a poet's mind to go through the Bible carefully and prayerfully to find the dawns in that great Book. That would be a real contribution to poetry and Biblical interpretation.

I like to know when things happen. I want to know whether they happened by day or night, by noon or dawn or twilight. I can get my soul in a better mood to understand them if I can know when they happened.

I know that some of the most beautiful things that ever happened in the Bible happened at night, and I need not talk about them, for we all know them; the birth, the flight into Egypt, the beautiful Pentecost, the Gethsemane tragedy. But also some of the supremely beautiful and significant things happened at the dawning, and I, for one, would say that the Bible is a book of dawnings and the dawn.

One would find unanimous agreement that the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis, the Book of Beginnings, is a book of dawnings. It is the supreme Dawn Book of the Bible Library.

Nor can one ever think of the book of beautiful Ruth that he does not feel the dawn about him. Ruth is a book of dew-wet dawnings, on the Moabite hills; dawnings beside still waters, dawnings in wheat fields, dawnings of love and awakening of womanhood.

Nor can one read the Songs of Solomon that he does not feel dawnings everywhere. Here is a song of love and a song of dawnings.

It is a song of young love—Spring Love—Youth Love that is alight with the dawn and a glorious thing to feel and see. All of these phrases are reminiscent of dawn:

“I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.”

“As the lily among thorns so is my love among the daughters.”

“As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.”

“For lo the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;

“The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

“Until the day break and the shadows flee away.”

This book talks about gardens, and roses, and lilies, and green shoots of figs, and apple trees, and beautiful smelling new grapes, and love and dawns. It is a book of Dawnings, and the spirit of Dawn is in it and within it.

But even more wonderfully is the book of Psalms a book of Dawn-Songs!

Sure enough, I have not forgotten that there are imprecatory Psalms and threatenings and storms sweeping through this book; and I have not forgotten the stars, and night scenes; nor have I forgotten the fact that this book is a comfort book for the aged—.

Aye! There's the secret. It is a comfort book for the aged because it is a book of dawns, for what is it that the aged most think about and love most? Two things they hold to their hearts: The dawn of their own lives here and the dawn in the land of tomorrow. They dwell with beautiful pathos on the dawns that have gone and the dawns eternal that are to come. They think over and talk over the memories of youth; their babies, and their young loves. How fair these are in memory's retrospect. And then their mood shifts to the dawns that are to come in **Heaven Land** where they are going soon. And both of these things are beautiful.

That is why the Book of Psalms is so loved by old folks—because it is a book of dawnings. It brings them what they lack and want so much.

And it was a book of dawns because so much of it was written by that singing poet, **David**, who tended sheep on Judean hills by night, and watched the dawns. A thousand dawns had Poet David to draw from. He was there and saw the dawns. He did not have to guess at dawns. He saw them and loved them and lived them, and was lifted up close to God by them.

There can never be a truly great poet who has not lived with the day-dawns. That is impossible. David did and that is why he wrote a Book of Poems on dawn.

That was the reason he knew that, though the night of sorrow and suffering may seem interminable and though the dark night of watching and waiting may seem as if it will never end, he could write:

“Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning.”

That was the reason David so often started his poems off with this beautiful line:

“I will lift up mine eyes.” It was because he was so accustomed to watch for the dawning, and to look upon its glories when it came.

That was the reason why Poet David could write with all of its regnant and pregnant meaning that beautifully tender and understanding verse, which has been a comfort through all ages to those who sorrow:

“My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.”

No one could have written that tender thing of sympathy and faith who did not know the dawn and who did not believe in the dawn Eternal. There is no more tender verse in all the Bible.

So we have these great books of the Old Testament as distinctly the Books of Dawn and dawns and dawnings: Genesis, Ruth, The Songs of Solomon and the Poems of David: namely the Psalms. And

when we live in these Psalms we live in the dawn; and we get ready for the Resurrection of Christ, and for Eternal dawnings. These four books and Christ would make anybody understand that King Night is not to rule forever, but Prince Dawn, and Prince Christ is coming across the hills soon.

CHRIST WAS THE MAN OF DAWN AND DAWNINGS

The entire New Testament is a Book of Dawnings. It is like coming out of the dark into the dawn to come from the old Hebrew dispensation into the Christian Day.

When we catch the conception that Jesus had of the Kingdom of Heaven, and compare it with the ideas of the Old Testament, it is like coming out of darkness into daylight.

Matthew 20:1 indeed has this definition of the Kingdom:

“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder and went out **EARLY IN THE MORNING** to hire laborers into his vineyard.”

Everybody in the New Testament seems to be living in the early morning hours.

There was that beautiful scene when Jesus walked along the sea of Galilee and found that his disciples had been fishing all night—his disciples yet to be. They told him that they had toiled all night and taken nothing, and Jesus bade them launch out into the deep and he would show them how to fish. And then Jesus used this scene and this experience of the

dawning along the sea to teach them how to be fishers of men.

Jesus was out early, as usual, that dawning and we never think of this beautiful story that we do not associate it with the early dew-washed dawn of Galilee.

In Acts 5:21 we have that scene where the disciples have been cast into prison and the Angel came and released them. The Angel told them to go into the city and the temple and teach the people. The writer puts it this way:

“And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning and taught!”

The Triumphal Entry, one of the most significant scenes in the life of Jesus, took place in the dawning of a Sabbath day, while the dew was still wet on the grasses and trees.

Even the day after the Triumphal Entry, when Jesus had spent Sunday night in Bethany and was returning into Jerusalem, and he made the Fig Tree episode immortal, it happened in the early morning:

“Now IN THE MORNING, as he returned into the city, he hungered.”

Jesus was up early every morning in Passion Week and on three nights he was up all or most of the night.

It was at cock-crowing time that Peter denied him.

But, most glorious of all, it was at the dawning when he arose from the tomb to bring dawn, and the glory of dawn’s triumph into every life.

And when one looks through the beauty of this

story of the Bible; the Book of Ten Thousand Dawnings; through the Old Testament, and the New; through the life of Jesus with its unending dawns, he feels like crying out so that all the world may hear:

“Let the world awake and cry
Dark is over, dawn is nigh!
Spring has come and winter fled,
Christ is risen from the dead!”

And the echo of that glorious text comes to follow: “Until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts.”

LIFE IS FULL OF THE BEAUTY OF DAY DAWNS
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

“Still, still with thee, when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird waketh and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee.

“As in the dawning o'er the waveless ocean,
The image of the morning star doth rest,
So in the stillness, thou beholdest only
Thine image in the waters of my breast.

“Still, still to thee! as to each newborn morning,
A fresh and solemn splendor still is given,
So does this blessèd consciousness awaking,
Breathe each day nearness unto thee and heaven.

“So shall it be at last, in that bright morning,
When the soul waketh, and life’s shadows flee;
Oh, in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning,
Shall rise the glorious thought—I am with Thee!”

Harriet Beecher Stowe caught one phase of the meaning of Easter dawning to humanity. It means that there is ever and always an Easter dawning in each human heart if we will it so. It means that just as Christ arose to make glorious that dawning, so will he arise in our souls to make a dawning for us.

It means that, just as the ocean reflects the image of the morning star, so shall we who own Christ and his life in us, reflect the image of “The day star in our hearts” as the text talks out loud—loud enough to wake the dead souls of us!

And it means that not only may we have that morning star rise in our hearts here on earth but it also means that when the night comes, and the new day, eternal, dawns on our lives, that the glorious thought shall rise and dominate our hearts that: “I am with thee!”

That is the glorious exultation of all humanity that when Jesus rose from the grave of night into dawning on Easter morning he rose in our hearts also.

That is such a glorious thought that we want to shout aloud:

“Let the worlds awake and cry
Dark is over, dawn is nigh!”

Sometimes that Dawn comes out of the night of Storm and Conflict.

There were two travelers on the mountain trails, and they slept all night. At early morning, before even the first faint streaks of light had pierced the shadows in the mountain canyons, a terrible tumult arose. One was a traveler who had traveled the Pyrenees many times before. The other was a stranger to these mountains, and knew not the ways of the giants.

The winds swept down the valleys and stones began to tumble about them as if their tent was in the path of an avalanche. The stranger was frightened. The winds swept down the slopes of the mountains and carried their tent away down the cliff. The stranger became terrorized. He had never seen such things happen. Something seemed to be impending. Some awful, majestic and powerful thing. What was it?

"Is it the end of the world?" he cried with fear and trembling.

"No!" said the experienced native. "This is how the day dawns in the Pyrenees!"

So dawned the day of the Resurrection morning.

There was tumult, and storm, and earthquake.

It was so terrifying that the Roman guards fell on their faces in fright, hiding from something supernatural.

The trees swayed, and the earth shook as if in great convulsions.

Few knew that this was a spiritual earthquake that was not only to roll the stone away and shake

the physical earth, but that this was an earthquake that was to shake the Roman Empire down, and many an Empire and Kingdom which followed it; that here was an earthquake that was to change all of civilization—even time itself, all creeds, all the world's thought.

That earthquake was symbol of what that morning's event was to bring about. That earthquake was to shake the world to its foundations, and a new world was to arise from those crumbling ruins.

That's the way dawn came upon the world Easter morning. It came with tumult and earthquake. That is often the way a dawn comes to a soul through suffering, tumult, confusion, terror, struggle or death!

But when the dawn comes up in a human heart it is a supremely glorious thing, a morning never to be forgotten in that soul!

New Hope is born in the human body and soul when dawn comes.

The body is renewed by the night.

Healing and hope come with the shadows.

The body is rested and the soul finds repose in the darkness, so that, when dawning comes, the mind, and body are ready for the supreme tasks of life. The best mental work is done in the early morning hours. Jesus knew this truth and that was why he was always up and astir with the birds. Most of us lose the best working hours of the day by lying in bed, like sluggards, until the richest part of the day is done with and gone forever.

It is a thrilling story Edwin Markham told me

on a Sunday afternoon, of the writing of "The Man with the Hoe"; how the first verse was written in 1886; and then of how it was forgotten for thirteen years. Then of how he saw the original copy of "The Man with the Hoe" in San Francisco, and came home to write the second verse. Then of how he brooded over the third verse all day, and slept over it, and of how it came, like a flash, up out of his sub-conscious mind at dawn; of how he leapt from bed and wrote it down. Of how the fourth stanza came the same way, at daybreak, and the fifth the same way; at dawning of the third day.

His Lincoln—the Man of the People—came the same way—in the dawning, at that weird, mystical hour when the cocks begin to crow—out of the first light came that great poem—said to be the greatest poem ever produced on the American continent.

So come the great dreams, and the great visions, and the great creative thoughts of human kind, because Jesus Christ on Easter morning made the dawning clean and clear and pure forever. Jesus made dawn the symbol of creation.

Maeterlinck's "The Blue Bird" is the story of a search for Happiness.

The two little children—brother and sister—in their search for happiness came at last to a huge cemetery. It was a gruesome place, and in the stage version of this dramatic story the setting is perfect. Here are two little children at the edge of a great cemetery. Tombstones are all about. Great trees and greater shadows make everything gloomy. Tall grasses sway in the winds of night. There is an at-

mosphere of terror in the setting which you never forget to the end of your days. The audience feels a transport of chill foreboding, and terror, and you want to leave your seats in the theater and go to the rescue of the children, searching for Happiness, and put your arms about them to comfort them. They stand, hand in hand, terrified by the graveyard scene. The big tombstones seem so much larger than the children. The woods are so dark. The trees seem like huge monsters, reaching out with claw-like hands to grab them. They shudder and huddle in fear.

Then there is a sudden transformation, such as the artistry of the stage has learned through the centuries to do so well. There is a moment of darkness and silence. The curtain drops and rises again upon a beautiful garden, with sunlight pouring down through the trees, and from the blue skies. The garden is full of flowers, and birds can be heard singing everywhere. The children stand in the same position that they occupied before the transformation.

The little girl looks up at the brother and says: "Brother, where are the dead?"

"There are no dead!" the brother answers.

And he who can look upon that scene and not be stirred to tears is a hard heart.

And so comes the answer of Easter dawning to those who have lost little babies. "Mother, there are no dead!"

And so comes the answer of Easter dawning to those who have lost wives, husbands, children,

mothers, loved ones: "Brothers, sisters, there are no dead!"

That is the great message of Easter dawning to the world: "World, there are no dead!"

It is great news we bring this day:

"Let the world awake and cry
Dark is over, dawn is nigh;
Spring has come, and winter fled,
Christ is risen from the dead!"

Victor Hugo, that great maker of men and masterpieces, he who wrote the rising splendor of a Jean Valjean's regeneration, a life that knew a new dawning, said when he was nearing the end that he looked back upon his work as a little thing; that he had written novels, and poems, and plays, many of them, but that he was only beginning; that he had labored to bring about social justice; but that he had just started to labor; that when death came he would just begin to live:

"The tomb is no blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes on twilight; it opens on the dawn!"

Life is continuous. The Easter teaches us that. Death and the tomb are not blind alleys but great thoroughfares. Life goes on in that other land.

Just as it did in "Men Like Gods" when H. G. Wells makes his group of characters, who are riding in an automobile, suddenly run into a smash-up—over a cliff—and awake in the land where there are "Men Like Gods" going right on—in the same automobile—just driving on from earth into Heaven—no stop—no swerving—no uncertainty—just going

on, and on, and on forever. That is the teaching of Easter.

Then came Bishop Quayle's last work in his last book, “Out-of-doors With Jesus.” It is a story that runs like this:

“A Christian man was in the valley of the shadow of death—his last night on earth. Beside him sat a friend the night through, out of love for his dying friend and so that the sound of a friend's voice or the touch of a friend's hand might not be absent as he pilgrimed through the dark. All the lights were lit the whole night through, for it is dim walking in the Death Valley, and many stumble. When the night was at its darkest, not a long space before the dawn the dying man opened his eyes wide, looked round about, peered in his friend's face with querying surprised gaze; and in an inflection of surprise said, ‘Put out the lights; the sun is up!’ And then he closed his eyes quietly in death. And the watcher said to the dead man's minister: ‘He said, “Put out the lights; the sun is up!”’ Wasn't that strange?’”

No, brother, not strange, but very beautiful!

Put out the lights; the sun is up! It is Easter dawning on the world!

Put out the lights; the sun is up! It is Easter in this room!

Put out the lights; the sun is up! It is Easter in my soul!

“Let the world awake and cry
Dark is over, dawn is nigh!”

For “the day star has risen in your hearts!”

A few years ago, my friend Bishop Henderson, asked me to write a song for the Epworth Leaguers to sing at Summer Institutes. I had been in many Summer Institutes, giving the Morning Watch addresses. For three years on the Pacific Coast, at beautiful Asilomar in the Pines and on the white dunes a thousand of us used to gather at six o'clock every morning. It was a meeting at dawning of a thousand young people in the dawn of their lives to worship God in a Morning Watch, and our souls were deeply stirred. I knew that the spirit of Youth was Dawn, and that dawn was Youth; and that somehow these boys before me were the Sons of the Sunrise and that these Daughters were the Daughters of Dawn, so I wrote the Bishop a hymn for Youth with this refrain in it:

“We are the sons of the Sunrise,
We are the daughters of Dawn.”

And that is what we Christians are also. We are the Sons of the Sunrise and we are the Daughters of Dawn, because when Jesus Christ comes into a soul He gives that soul a re-birth, and a new birthday; and forever, we are filled and thrilled with new life.

“Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in
your hearts!”

CHAPTER IV

“Like Ocean’s Thunder on a Sounding Shore”

GENESIS 45:3: “And Joseph said unto his brethren, ‘I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?’ ”

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

“Like ocean’s thunder on a sounding shore,
Life! Life! More Life! Christ lives forever-
more.”

—G. A. Studdert Kennedy.

The story on which this sermon is based is one of the most thrilling stories in all the world. The proof of this is the fact that it fascinates children from its beginning to its end. One of the first stories that Betty loved and that her Daddy used to tell her over and over again was this story of Joseph and his many-colored coat, and the jealousy of his brothers, and how they sold him into captivity, and how he became the premier of the Pharaoh, and how the famine came, and how his brothers came up to Egypt to get food; of how Joseph met them, and they did not at first know him, and of how he wept aloud at his memory of them, and then was so anxious for his father; to have news of that father; and to know that the father was alive and well

that he wept and cried out his first question: "I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?"

I think that there is no shorter combination of statement and question in such juxtaposition in all the Bible—aye, in all literature. The very brevity, the short, sharp, impulsive shooting of this statement and question thrills the soul with its strenuous impact. All the active, important, and yet lonely years since his brethren had sold him into slavery were summed up in the flash of a second in that statement and question:

"I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?"

If modern writers could learn to write like that; to sum up in a single sentence—like Victor Hugo—sentences that bombard their blunt pathos against the soul; if we modern realists could write like that we could shake the world's soul awake, with these machine-gun-like, trip-hammer sentences:

"And he wept aloud—and said to his brethren: 'I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?'"

There is a great artist at work. He paints in short, swift, lightning-like strokes across the canvas of the soul of humanity. Rain and dew and dripping tears from a boyish face—a boyish face suggesting power and strength in it, a face with a lurid background of Egyptian color in sky and cloud and even in the royal dress of his office under the Pharaoh. The background a tall, stately youth; kneeling before him his brothers, dusty and travel stained; emaciated, hungry, frightened, fearful, and begging on their knees in sackcloth and ashes. But there stands this manly Joseph.

No thought of vengeance is on his soul because his brothers sold him into captivity. No thought of lording it over them; no feeling of hate or hurt; no aloofness; no suggestion of punishment for his brethren in his soul. His love sweeps all else away; he loves his brothers and his father too much for any little thoughts to creep in, and he weeps. I know how he felt, for whenever I am away from my own father for a long time and I see him I weep—I know not why—but I can't help it. I look upon it as foolish when I am far away from him, and think it over, but always when the experience comes of seeing him again—and holding him in my arms—and thinking of all that he had done for me, and what he means to me, and what he has suffered for me; and of the common sorrow that we bore together in the death of Mother—I weep and he weeps—and then we smile through our tears and are happy to have each other again. I know how Joseph felt when he wept at the sight of his brethren and shot that short sentence of eager wistfulness at them: "I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?"

And the answer came thundering back at Joseph as it comes back to us this day:

"Like ocean's thunder on a sounding shore,
Life! Life! More Life! Christ lives forevermore!"

Yes, your Father lives! He is alive! He is not dead! He lives forevermore!

That pathetic tale of King David and the battle—and the King's waiting for a report of the battle.

And David sat between the two gates of the wall waiting for word of the battle, and he sent a watchman to the walls to report the news.

And the watchman saw a man running toward the city and reported this to the King who was waiting with anxious heart.

And another messenger came and the watchman reported the second watchman, and the king waited with anxious heart for tidings of the battle and for news of his son, Absalom.

And when the first runner reported he said, "All is well!" and fell down on the earth before the king and reported that God had delivered his armies and that his forces had won the battle.

"Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my Lord the King."

That was the report of the messenger; a report that would have delighted any king's heart. He had won. Victory was his! His forces had triumphed over the enemy.

But King David had other and more important anxieties in his father heart and, before that breathless messenger could finish his report the king had cried: "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

That is the great heart-cry of the world: "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

"Doth my father yet live?"

God, how that cry has wrung the world's heart through untold generations!

That is the old personal cry about our loved ones and that is the world's old cry about Immortality

and Jesus and God the Father. King David got no joyous answer about Absalom. Absalom was dead in battle, hanging to a tree by his beautiful locks and pierced by darts of the enemy; but the world of humanity has a better answer to its heart-cry than David, the father of Absalom had. This is the answer to the world's lonely cry for Immortality and reality in its religious need:

"Like ocean's thunder on a sounding shore,
Life! Life! More Life! Christ lives forevermore!"

The story of Lazarus is a symbol of what Jesus meant to teach the world. Lazarus was like an own brother to Jesus. Jesus was more at home with Mary and Martha than with any other women on earth—not even excepting his own mother. These women mothered and sistered and loved him. They gave him food—the one; and the other gave him the understanding heart of sympathy—and these two things a man must have to live forever in his spirit.

And Lazarus died—the brother of these two women whom he loved.

And they came to Jesus in their hearts, and cried out to him, "Lazarus is dead. He has been dead for days. It is hopeless. Why were you so careless and indifferent about Lazarus? Why did you not come? You could have saved him! When we sent you word, why did you not come, Lord Jesus?"

The episodes of this experience show that Jesus wanted to teach this little group of his friends that those who live in Christ live forever.

He made light of Death to those he loved most deeply.

Every step in this story shows that. Christ was undoubtedly trying to make the death of Lazarus a symbol of his own death which he knew was shortly to come—and he wanted those whom he loved to remember when he himself lay cold in the tomb that that was only temporary—that he only slept—that there is no death for those who live in Christ.

So he said: “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep!”

Then later Jesus admitted that Lazarus was dead.

When Jesus came Lazarus had been dead four days.

When Jesus came Martha met him afar off and said: “If thou hadst been here my brother had not died!”

Jesus said: “Thy brother shall rise again!”

Martha said: “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day; but what I want is to have him alive *now!*”

Jesus said: “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die!”

What Jesus was saying to his dearest friends is the heart of the Gospel that we believe and live in and that sustains our souls:

“Like ocean’s thunder on a sounding shore,
Life! Life! More Life! Christ lives forevermore!”

Jesus demonstrated this every time he raised a human being from the dead.

Jesus demonstrated this truth every time he cured a palsied limb, for palsy is one form of decay and death.

Jesus demonstrated this every time he made deaf ears to hear by the magic touch of his hands, for deaf ears are one form of death and a breaking down of physical machinery.

Jesus demonstrated this truth in which he himself believed every time he cured a man rotten with leprosy. What he said to that man was: “Your poor miserable body is dying. It is rotting away. The cells are breaking down. I shall show you that I am Master over death; that I am life; that I am life in every cell and atom; that I am Master of those things which break down cells; I WILL! BE THOU CLEAN!”

Jesus himself said over and over again: “I came, that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly!”

Jesus said to the woman at the well: “I am the water of life, and if ye drink of this water of life, this magic water of life, this water from a Ponce de León spring, ye shall never thirst again.”

You might think that that is a far-away story and that it is Oriental imagery; and that it is nothing but meaningless poetry or a figure of speech; and that it is all very well as such—but that it has no meaning for to-day.

Sherwood Eddy tells the story of his own early experience.

Back in 1895 he graduated from college and went to India as a missionary. But he had only been there a short time when he had a nervous breakdown and went to pieces, shattered like a tree blown by the typhoon.

Blue and discouraged and broken he almost gave up his dreams of being a missionary.

Then the full import of that story of the woman at the well came sweeping in upon him like the breaking of a new dawn across the sea; like the sweeping of high winds from Himalayan peaks, snow washed across his hot and thirsty desert soul; like spring breaks upon the world came the full import of this truth of the availability of the water of life of which he might drink; came like a gushing spring flowing from Mt. Everest's crystal waters, came to make anew his body and his soul.

And when the full import of the meaning of that spring; that fountain; that well of the water of life came to him, from that time on, Sherwood Eddy was a new man in body and soul. His body became a thing of steel and iron; his nerves became steady and at peace with the universe; his soul had fall upon it a mantle of serenity and through it a current of power gushed as if some spiritual Niagara were pouring its transformed currents through him.

Niagara's spiritual power was pouring through him; through his body, through his soul, through his life.

Who that knows great world forces will deny that Sherwood Eddy is one of the great preachers, one of the world's great missionaries, one of the

world’s great prophets of to-day. No man has traveled more than he; no man has influenced his day and age more than he. Year after year he travels around the earth, bringing the world more closely together—like a great modern Paul on his missionary journeys.

He learned through that simple story that Christ lives—and that Christ can make others live also.

From that day to this Sherwood Eddy has never started a day without drinking at this well of living water; he has never gone out to meet mankind until he has met his God. He has his hour alone with his Bible and his God every morning first, before he meets the world. He drinks at the well of the Bible and the well of Prayer and Devotions, and he drinks of living water. To him that well still lives and pours forth living water. To him Christ lives. There is nothing more certain to Sherwood Eddy than this truth:

“Like ocean’s thunder on a sounding shore,
Life! Life! More Life! Christ lives forevermore!”

In one of Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman’s meetings a man gave the following remarkable testimony:

“I got off at the Pennsylvania depot one day as a tramp, and for a year I begged on the streets for a living. One day I touched a man on the shoulder and said, ‘Mister, please give me a dime.’

“As soon as I saw his face I recognized my old father.

“‘Father, don’t you know me?’ I asked.

"Throwing his arms around me he cried, 'I have found you! I have found you; all I have is yours!'"

"Men, think of it, that I, a tramp, stood begging my father for ten cents, when for eighteen years he had been looking for me to tell me that all he had was mine."

That is God's way—that is his living way. All that he has is for his children. We may go away from him—like the Prodigal Sons of Earth, and the Prodigal Daughters; and stay away for eighteen years, and twenty years and half a lifetime, but the father is still there, eager to give us all that he has.

That is God's way; that is the way of Jesus; that is even the way of earthly fathers. We go about this poor miserable world begging for the dimes and the husks, eating with the pigs, when we might be dining at the table of our Father in abundance.

When we have such an experience the truth of God's goodness, the truth that he is still alive comes to us like some great sound:

"Like ocean's thunder on a sounding shore,
Life! Life! More Life! Christ lives forevermore!"

Christ lives to-day—more alive than nineteen centuries ago when he arose from the tomb; and he lives in the world as a great spiritual force which is gradually shaping the destinies of humankind like a leaven for eternal good. Even the great Oriental world, with its untold millions of people is recognizing the fact that Christ lives and is a supreme force in all world events to-day; that, pro or con, the

world considers Christ in every move that it makes or thinks.

Gladstone lived for fifty years as a great statesman, leading the world's destinies, and he made the famous statement that in all of that time he had known the great world leaders, and that of every one of the world leaders he had known all but one were Christians.

When we think of the great World War that has just passed we think of Foch, Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson, and it is a striking thing to be able to say that all three of these great leaders were active Christians.

Robert E. Speer in a recently published sermon tells the following story which is illustrative of what I am trying to put to you:

"Professor Lang, of the University of Alabama, tells of an experience that he counted one of the most singular in his life, which happened when he was a graduate student in the University of Edinburgh some years ago. He had gone to McEwen Hall to hear Mr. Balfour deliver an address on the moral values which unite the nations. It was a wonderful address. As Professor Lang looked across at the audience to see the effect of it on those who listened, he saw opposite in the gallery a Japanese student leaning over the gallery and drinking in every word. And when Mr. Balfour had ended naming the moral values which he conceived bound the nations together, or were at last to accomplish the unity of man, there was an instant of appreciative silence over all that great hall, and in that moment of si-

lence the Japanese student stood up and leaning over the balcony said, 'But, Mr. Balfour, what about Jesus Christ?' He had spoken of the moral values that unite the nations and left out the only value that can unite them; the only undying, valid bond, the only power by which at last the whole life of the world is to be made harmonious and complete."

Everything in God's universe thunders the great good news that he lives forevermore.

I have stood at the foot of Niagara, and heard its deafening thunder and have known that God lives. I have stood at the foot of mountain cataracts in Yosemite; Yosemite with its thunderings of a dozen great falls; Yosemite with its silver stream plunging from the white snows of fifty-six eastern peaks; Yosemite with its thunder blasts of falling water; Yosemite with its storms; Yosemite with its thunder reverberating from cliff to cliff; and I have, somehow, known that God is alive.

I have stood on the great Pacific Ocean at Land's End when a Pacific storm which had been raging for a week thundered its mighty blasts against the cliff overlooking the Golden Gate. I have watched the waves, mountain-high, bombarding that age-old cliff, and I have known that God was alive!

I have stood in a magnificent rose garden on the Pacific Coast with a million roses in bloom at once, cream-colored roses, yellow beauties, great crimson heart-bursts, roses as pink as a baby's cheek when winter winds have brought the flush of health; roses as white as Shasta's immaculate snows, so high above the earth that no dirt flies; roses as golden as a girl's

sun-kissed hair; roses as purple as the ancient robes of King Solomon; roses everywhere sending up rich, hot, sun-born clouds of perfume that swept one into paradise. And I have known, as I looked upon all of this beauty and perfume and wonderment that God was alive in the earth.

I have stood and seen "God spill this golden splendor out across the western hills and light the silver lamps of eve." I have seen him "Hide a world to unveil a universe"—and I have known that God was still alive in his earth forevermore.

I have seen a day break across Nebraska prairies, with the golden rose-rays advancing like scout troops ahead of the army of the morn, advancing cautiously, feeling their way. I have seen this day break and fall with golden splendor on the tawny prairie grass and the cotton trees, and illuminate the windows of a prairie town until they seemed to be made of magic gold, brought to life under the magic wand of some fairy princess—and I have known after that dawn that God is still alive in the earth.

I have watched the dawn of the year around the world. I have seen it sweep across the sand dunes of San Francisco, this Spring-dawn—and leave behind a gossamer trail of yellow and blue lupin with the scent of wistaria pervading the dunes—and an atmosphere of life and awakening that made me know that Winter had not, after all, conquered Life and that God was still alive in the earth. I have seen this Year-Dawn in the Oriental world, after the Rainy Season stirs the earth to crimson blossom in the Flame of the Forest tree, and the great crimson

poinsettia bushes, and the glorious awakening of the earth. I have seen this Earth reborn each year in glorious splendor that set my soul to singing new songs, and my lips to shouting new Hosannas; and I have known that God was still alive.

I have stood beside many a resurrected soul. I have talked with a boy who had attempted suicide because he had been drinking continuously for a month and because he was shattered in his nerves. He sat in his lonely room sobbing and shaking with poison; with no hope left. I sat there and tried to find some manhood left, some spark of courage that I could awaken. I could find nothing. He could not even control his body; much less his spirit. He was abject. He had no home, no friends, no hope, no God. He had started to drink after fifteen months of total abstinence. On New Year's Eve a cowardly woman told him where he could get something—told him for the sake of making a little money.

Then I prayed with that boy—and two days later he came to my home with a shave, a clean collar, a new light in his eyes, and said, "I'm through for good now! You could put a gallon of that stuff down before me and I wouldn't touch it. I'm through."

Something had happened. It had happened when the two of us knelt in prayer beside his bed. And when I saw the physical, mental and spiritual transformation that had gone on in that lad I knew that God was alive; that Christ lives forevermore!

Every time I hear or know or see a transformed

human soul, I know that Christ still lives; that he is not dead—that he is alive forevermore.

The other day in my beloved California they drilled wells and tapped the steam-power of the under-earth. Under California for hundreds of millions of years a great furnace and boiler has been generating steam power. A man named Grant sunk a well to a depth of only 303 feet and got steam pressure of sixty-eight pounds. He sank another well and now has power worth a quarter of a million dollars a year.

This to me is one of the most phenomenal discoveries of recent years; this source of untapped power in California.

As the author of the story writes, when he got near the two wells, Mr. Grant handed him some cotton to put in his ears. "Put that in your ears, you will need it when we get to the wells."

"I did as he told me, but with the thought that it was all nonsense. I had stood alongside of locomotives. Why should I mind a steam well or two?"

"But Grant was right. As we neared the steam-wells the noise was terrific. When we actually stood beside the wells I could not hear my own voice. I tried to talk to Grant but had to give it up. We could only talk by signs."

That is God alive in the earth. That is like God's spiritual power, as yet untapped and unused.

"Like ocean's thunder on a sounding shore,
Life! Life! More Life! Christ lives forevermore!"

I have stood beside a lonely tomb. I have known that in that tomb lay the hope of the world. He was dead to all physical appearances—white as the winding sheets they wrapped around him on Calvary. He was dead—as dead as the stone that capped the entrance to that tomb. He was dead, as dead as nails, and spikes, and spear thrusts, and thorns, and blows, and suffering, and poison cups, and cruelty, and hate could make him. He had been crucified.

The world of materialism and materialists went away satisfied that they had accomplished their purpose. Rome was satisfied that she had ended the nuisance of this strange carpenter of Galilee.

The city life of Jerusalem went on, a few rods away, as if nothing had happened. They had killed Jesus and that was finished. Ribald jests passed from mouth to mouth about the “King of the Jews.”

He was dead as the hopelessness that settled down over the friends of the Disciples and the friends of Jesus himself. He was as dead as Death!

But no! Something stirs in the earth!

The Dawn breaks, white and glorious, over the world.

The earth trembles!

An angel appears!

The Roman guards fall to the earth in fear—powerless!

Flowers of beauty and sweetness blossom, and it is Spring—it is dawn! Christ has risen. He was too powerful for Death. He conquered!

“Thou hast conquered, Galilean King!”

Thou art alive forevermore!

Trevor H. Davies, in “The Inner Circle” says of John the Baptist what must be said of Jesus at this holy hour:

“A strange, almost unearthly figure, he appeared before the people with spirit blazing like lightning, and words reverberating as the thunder upon the hills on which he had lived so long!”

“And Joseph said unto his brethren: ‘I am Joseph; doth my Father yet live?’ ”

And the answer comes reverberating through all time:

“Like ocean’s thunder on a sounding shore,
Life! Life! More Life! Christ lives forevermore!”

CHAPTER V

The Spiritual Rendezvous of Christmas Day

LUKE 19:2nd verse: "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

"The dead and the absent always stay
With those they love on Christmas day!"

This is a beautiful saying in the Christmas story; perhaps the most beautiful touch of all that glorious story.

A mother's thoughts about that glorious day when she feels her babe in her arms and against her breasts are long, long thoughts.

Perhaps the most sacred thoughts of all love and life come then. The thoughts of a mother at such a time are untouched of the physical. Her love for her husband, no matter how beautiful it may be, has always something about it that is not perfect, but a mother's love for her own babe—ah, that love is just a little short of Divine love.

The long months of anxiety are over; the worry has ceased; the pain and physical anguish; the mental and spiritual stress of bringing a child into the world is finished. There is relaxation, peace and glory.

There is a sense of having achieved something; of having a right now for time to rest and to enjoy the thing attained: Motherhood. That is one of the most satisfactory moments of all human life.

Then, if ever, come sacred thoughts, and then, if ever, come the long, long dreams of Motherhood.

It was at just such a moment that Mary "kept all these sayings in her heart."

What did she keep in her heart so sacredly enshrined in that sanctuary of a Mother's Treasure Vault of Memories?

She kept the news that the Wise Men brought to her. That was a marvelous story for a mother to hear about her newborn babe; that story of how these strange men from three different nations had each had a vision of the birth of a Savior; one from far off India, one from Greece, one from Egypt. Let any mother imagine what her feelings would be, if, on the birth of her child three strangers should come into the hospital room, or into her home and tell her such a story as those wise men told that mother on that eventful day. That story was enough to thrill the most prosaic heart on earth. It was an amazing story; an Arabian Nights tale of olden days, which that mother heard on that delightful morning.

Then came the Shepherds with their strange and mysterious tale of how, as they slept, a beautiful star appeared in the skies, and a beautiful song was heard in the sky, and beautiful white angels were seen in the sky singing that song of "Peace on Earth; good will to men." They told of how they

were at first terrified by this unusual phenomenon; of how they were sleeping on the Judean hillside, with the sheep safe and the night quiet; when suddenly that strange singing from the skies broke into the stillness.

That was enough to make Mary think. That was enough to make her think that there was something Divine about her child—that story added to the strange messenger who had told her that that child was to come soon. She said to herself, “I’ll keep these things in my heart and when I’m lonely I’ll take them out and look at them again.”

“And all of these things Mary kept and pondered in her heart.”

CHRISTMAS EVER SINCE THAT TIME SEEMS
TO HAVE BEEN A TIME OF KEEPING IN
OUR HEARTS OUR LOVED ONES

That is perhaps the first characteristic of Christmas time; that we keep our loved ones in our hearts. Out of the Christmas spirit has grown the beautiful custom of keeping in our hearts all those whom we have loved and lost a while, either by separation or death.

At Christmas time, up out of our sub-conscious minds come back names and faces that we have forgotten all the year. But they all come back then.

First: We keep in our hearts on Christmas Day our loved ones.

Every child on Christmas Day keeps the face,

form and presence of a Mother in its heart; be that child a man or a woman.

My own mother has been dead for more than thirty years, but at Christmas time she comes back to me as fresh and sweet and girlish as when she died. I can remember the kind of a dress that she wore with lavender flowers in it. I can remember how I used to slip into the closet alone, after she died, and bury my face in the folds of that dress and sob. My father kept that dress hanging in that closet for several weeks because, as he later told me, he did not have the courage to remove it and put it away. On Christmas Day I can remember that dress.

I can remember the way she did her hair. I remember that she looked so beautiful to me. She parted it in the middle, simply and plainly, and it was drawn back tight against her head, with little ringlets of curls sticking out here and there.

I can remember how blue her eyes were and how bright and happy they were to see her five kiddies happy about a Christmas tree. I can remember how busy she was and yet how gracious and sweet and thoughtful of us kiddies.

I can remember one Christmas, when there was no money, and my Mother said to me, because I was the oldest: "I'm afraid that we'll not have much of a Christmas this year." I can remember that she appealed to me to help her make the rest of the children happy, because I was the oldest of the crowd. I can remember how she inspired me to help.

I remember that for a week that responsibility was on me, and that shadow; for I was still a child and Christmas without presents seemed a tragedy to me; a great, deep tragedy.

Then I remember that the mail came and brought a gift from my mother's brother; a gift of fifty dollars to get her a new dress. She had not had a new dress in years. But she kept the old one and spent the money to give us children our Christmas.

And always on Christmas Day my Mother comes back and is with me as surely as she ever was. I am busy during the year, and forget her in the rush of many things, but at Christmas time she comes back to me and is with me.

And we think of Our Fathers on Christmas Day.

No matter how busy we have been on that day and at that time we think of our fathers; our fathers who put up the stockings and filled them; our fathers who went out into the woods in the old days and cut the Christmas tree down and hauled it on an old flat-bottomed sled. Those were the happy days; the days of yesteryear. You did not go to a vacant city lot in those days and select a scrubby pine from a lot of poor commercialized and stricken trees. You went out with your father in those days and selected one of thousands of fir-trees growing in the woods and you had the joy of helping him cut that tree down, dragging it through the snow to the sled, and riding home, cuddled up against his warm body in the straw of that sled. You can hear the jingle of the bells to-day in memory. You can smell the odor of pine; newly cut pine; and you can

feel the warmth of your father's body against yours.

"And you ponder all these sayings and these memories and these blessed things in your heart as precious heirlooms.

"The dead and the absent always stay
With the ones they love on Christmas day."

And your old friends, tried and true, are with you on Christmas Day and that is a beautiful thing to think about, I am sure.

Some of the truest friends that we have are the kind of friends who are always there when we want them and when we need them.

A true friend is a friend with whom you can sit around a wood fire for two hours and say nothing; nor need to say anything. We like that sort of a friend. A person who thinks that you always have to be talking or jabbering to entertain a friend is a shallow person, just as is the person whose idea of hospitality is running, running, running every minute—doing something during every minute of that friend's visit.

A real friend is often a friend who does his work in his corner of the world from one year's end to the other end and does not write, but who at Christmas time remembers you and is with you in spirit.

We have several such friends, and as I think of them it occurs to me that they are about the closest friends that I have. I am thinking now of a Methodist preacher and his wife. We knew them in college. Mary and Mrs. Stidger were fraternity sisters

and Olin and myself were fraternity brothers and lived together in the same house for four years. We were all in an Academy together teaching for three years. The man and myself were in Theological School together and used to walk along the Charles River in Boston every afternoon. They are our two closest college friends, and yet we seldom write to each other during the year. They are doing their work in the ministry in Syracuse, New York, and we are in Kansas City, but we are all busy and we do not write often between Christmas and Christmas but we always sit down and remember each other at Christmas time.

We have two other friends that we have grown close to, since college days. They were also preachers whom we met on the Pacific Coast. They are now living in New York. All of us are busy and we do not correspond much, or see much of each other all year, but at Christmas time our hearts get very close together.

Then we remember little Kramer who was killed in San Francisco; we remember his piteous cry: "I want to go home, Mother! I want to go home!" It was Christmas time, and he wanted to go home from the hospital where they had taken him after the cruel truck ran over his little body. And God, hearing his cry and knowing that he could never go back to his earthly home again, bent over and took him to his Heavenly Home.

We never forget that, we two families and friends. That was a sacred and a holy hour for us all and it bound us very close together. We have

been bound together by hoops of steel. And, although we do not keep closely in touch during the year, when Christmas draws around we find our hearts drawn to each other like

“Magnets that attract each other.”

Like planets that come into juxtaposition once a year are our friendships. Mars is closest to the earth at a certain time each year.

Like a Halley’s comet comes around to get close to the earth every seventy-five years, so we each year feel the tug of love and friendship at Christmas time:

“The dead and the absent always stay
With the ones they love on Christmas day.”

OUR DEAD ARE WITH US ON CHRISTMAS DAY

They would be with us all the time if we gave them a chance.

But we are so busy that we do not give them thought, but somehow at Christmas time we think of our beautiful dead, whom we have loved and lost a while.

And it is not a thing incredible; and it is not a thing of horror, to think of our dead being with us at Christmas time. It is a beautiful thing to me. I like to think of it as the natural thing that my dear, dead mother is not dead beyond recall; but that along about Christmas time, she gets lonely for me, and just can’t stand it even in Heaven at that time.

The tug of my love pulls her down here to be with me.

I was talking with a mother in this church who in recent months has lost a beautiful daughter. No, not lost! Once Betty was talking with a grown woman and that woman said: "Isn't it too bad that Mrs. Jones lost her baby?" Betty's reply was: "She didn't lose her, she just died!" And I have never heard the Christian philosophy put more briefly or more simply than that child put it. "They didn't lose her. She just died."

This woman said to me, "Sometimes I awaken at night calling for her. Then at other times in my dreams I seem to feel her near me. Is she really near me then?" That was the plaintive, pathetically plaintive question which that lonely mother asked me as we chatted after prayer meeting. And I told her God's truth when I said: "Yes, she is near you, when you relax in sleep. You let her come to you then. She would come more often if you would let her come."

That is what I say to all who have lost loved ones. They are not far away and on such beautiful family days as Christmas they come to us and abide with us.

In Philadelphia an old college graduate and his friends used to have an annual Christmas Eve dinner at which fifty years ago twenty plates were set. The understanding was that they would meet and leave a vacant chair for those who were not there. Each year more of this college class died and when I heard the story, for several years, one frail old man ate that dinner alone with all nineteen chairs set.

He lived over again the glad, joyous days of youth in that Christmas celebration.

Do you think that was a melancholy thing? It was not. It was a beautiful memorial service, as sacred as the Last Supper, done in memory of friends at Christmas time.

“The dead and the absent always stay
With those they love on Christmas Day.”

When I was a pastor in San Francisco, a week before Christmas a woman called me to her home and gave me a lot of toys and presents. They were toys and presents of her little boy who had gone away. He had been gone three years and the mother wanted some other little boys and girls to be made happy with his presents so she called me in to distribute them. I was with her when she opened the trunk where she kept them and amid mingled tears and laughter we took them out and wrapped them up, and dreamed. It was an hour I shall never forget. And the thing that I shall remember to the end of my days was this: “Billy always seems so near his mother’s heart at Christmas time.”

And since then I have pondered this beautiful saying in my heart.

And Bishop Hughes once said to me: “My children have all grown up, Will, and often we cannot get them all together at Christmas time for they are far away—but—we still have our baby that died—we still have her for Christmas time. She has never grown up. We still have our baby.”

And on Christmas Day we forget the dead Christ in the newborn Christ. And so also on Christmas Day we forget the dead child, and the dead daughter, and the dead friend in the Living Presence of that friend and that child as they were on happier Christmas days.

WE HAVE OUR LOVED ONES WHENEVER
WE THINK OF THEM

Some person who was strangely wise said once upon a time in a burst of sudden inspiration: "If there is a meaning at all in the truth that we are spiritual beings, then, whenever we think of our loved ones they are with us, and neither death nor distance can separate us."

Some strange things are going on in Spiritualism, led by reputable men like Conan Doyle, Basil King and others. But I do not mean that to-day. I mean something infinitely higher and more beautiful than hearing the voices of our friends, than feeling the touch of their poor human hands, even than seeing the presence of their protoplasm. I mean something that is, compared with these mere physical manifestations, expressed in these lines:

"All her feelings matched with mine
Are as moonlight unto sunlight,
Are as water unto wine."

I mean that, on Christmas Day, or any other time, whenever we think of our loved ones we are with them and they are with us.

If the spiritual world and the thought world mean anything—aye, if our religion means anything at all—it means that.

Whenever we think of our loved ones we are with them.

To-day by merely thinking of the cities, the scenes, the ways and the people of Japan, I am in Japan. My thoughts take me to Japan quicker than lightning or sound waves travel. Just now, in this sermon, at this Christmas time, in a flash of thought, I am in Japan, where Mrs. Stidger and Betty and I spent one Christmas six years ago in a little mission compound which has since been destroyed by the earthquake in Japan. Every detail of that Christmas stands out, as if etched in the acid of loneliness. That was a Christmas that will stand out forever. I imagine that Betty will never forget it. I am there this second, in a flash. Mind travels like light.

I can stand in this pulpit to-day and in a flash I can be in my own home town for a score of Christmas days. I can carry my poor self to San Francisco to that little church—and the three Christmas days we spent there. I can shoot like sound from the Pacific Coast to the Atlantic for three Christmas days spent in East Greenwich Academy. I can fly to college for several Christmas seasons.

What does that? Thought! Spirit! That is the spiritual part of me going from world to world; from year to year; around the world and back again; quicker than it takes me to tell it in this sermon.

Now I am with Father. I see his face. I feel his hand. I feel his lips. I see tears in his eyes—such

tears as are always there when he greets me. He is alive, but in a second I am with him. Thought carries me to his side or him to my side in an instant. That is what our religion means; that is its core; that is its heart and soul: that we be spiritual beings and, as spiritual beings, dead or alive, we move and have our existence aside from our poor bodies of mud and clay and chemicals.

Yes, we can be with our loved ones across the world or across the worlds. We can be with those who are in California, and those who are in Florida, and those who are in Heaven this Christmas time, if our religion means anything, if this Bible means anything.

I do not mean to hear their voices in a dark room. I mean to feel their living, eternal presence beside us, and in us, and around us.

That is more real than voice or gesture or protoplasm. That is the spiritually eternal, at work through God.

This is the philosophical background of this Christian thought:

"The dead and the absent always stay
With the ones they love on Christmas day."

And this thought is worth keeping in our hearts and pondering over at this sweet Christmas time.

CHRIST IS WITH US ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Try as we may we cannot obscure Christ on Christmas Day.

We have commercialized Christmas until it seems that we have hidden Christ but somehow he becomes real to us on Christmas Day. He is with us in reality.

“Reality, Reality!
Lord Jesus Christ, thou art to me.”

All of Christ’s life becomes real on Christmas Day and before Christmas. We think about Christ. We do not confine our thoughts of Christ to his birth but we run the golden gamut of his life from the “Manger to the Cross.” We not only see him as a little child but we see him as a Youth before the Wise Men; and we see him as a Teacher, and we see him in the Sanhedrin, and we see him on Calvary and we see him risen from the dead.

I want to suggest for Christmas Day this year a spiritual setting-up exercise. This is it:

Before we rise from bed that we try out three spiritual exercises. The first shall be to go over every Christmas Day that we can remember. Start in with the first Christmas you remember. You will find that most of your Christmas memories center about a church.

Second: That we lie still and summon all of our dearest friends and loved ones to our side before we arise. In Theodore Roosevelt’s letters to his sister, Mrs. Cowles, that great rugged character tells of how it was the custom in the Roosevelt family, for several generations, to have all of the children get their stockings from the mantelpiece and bring them

all in to father's and mother's bed and open their presents. That to me was one of the most beautiful things about Roosevelt—his home-life. It was a mark of his real greatness.

So let us summon to our bedside for a few moments on Christmas morning all of our friends and loved ones; summon them from the wide world; summon them from all over this nation and continent; summon some of them from Paradise to sit with us and chat with us as naturally as the Roosevelt children came to their father's bed with their unopened stockings.

Third: Let us start with the resurrection and go back to the Bethlehem night with Jesus. Let us remember that Christ started from the sky and that he returned to the sky. Let us remember that his life started in glory and that it ended in glory; that it started with Angels in Heaven and that it ended by His ascending up into Heaven again. He came down by the light of a star and he ascended by the light of the noonday sun. It was all bright and glorious.

So let us go over every event of Christ's life today and let us make Christ a reality to our own soul at this Christmas time.

And may I sum up all that I have said in this Christmas sermon by quoting the symphonic themes of this year's Christmas sermon:

“Reality, Reality!
Lord Jesus Christ, thou art to me!”

“Then let me go where'er I will
I find a sky-born music still.”

“Singin’ all over God’s Heaven.”

And, like Mary, let us ponder all these sayings in our hearts; let us ponder all these memories of other Christmas days in our hearts; let us ponder all of our loved ones in our souls. And I think that if we do these simple things, before we know it we shall have the living presence of, not only “That Old Sweetheart of Mine,” whom Riley conjured up from the fireplace, but we shall have known the full truth of:

“The dead and the absent always stay
With the ones they love on Christmas day.”

Let us allow the Fairy of Christmas Love to come and wave a Magic Wand over our heads and summon our loved ones to us this Christmas time.

Let us sit before the Hearth Fire of Memory and in the flames and smoke let the faces of our loved ones come back again and be with us.

Let us, through the sweet spirit of the little Child; the Christ Child; who gave us Christmas Day; summon back again all the beauty and love we ever knew in Christmas times, to sweeten our spiritual lives.

Let us ponder on the Miracle of Christmas.

And so to go back to Mary on Christmas Day.

She had heard these strange and wonderful things about her newborn child.

She did not forget them. She put them away in a memory vault of her heart, and she said to herself: "I'll put these things away. Some day I'll take them out again, and I'll look them all over." And the day came when she had need to remember what the Wise Men said of her son and there came a day when she had need to remember what the Shepherds said of her son—and what the angels said. So she kept a tryst with these memories. She pondered them in her heart.

The most beautiful tryst that I know is the tryst that a Mother keeps with her babes, living and dead. I have seen a hundred such trysts; seen them through a mist of tears on a dim twilight eventide; when a woman opened a little trunk and took out a pair of little white, soiled shoes and let me hold them in my hands; when she took out a pair of little stockings and showed them to me, sometimes with laughter, sometimes with tears; took out a little dress or a little cap, some toys, some marbles, some worn picture books, and a little picture.

Tryst! Tryst! Tryst! Thank God for them. Thank God that mothers always keep their rendezvous with their children; and that they keep singing in their souls: "I shall not fail that rendezvous!"

Thank God for the trysts of Christmas tide, trysts with our loved ones we have loved and lost awhile; trysts with our absent friends; trysts with the Christ Child; trysts with God; Christmas Trysts!

We have rendezvous with love this Christmas time; rendezvous with Christ and let us sing in our hearts: "I shall not fail that rendezvous!"

CHAPTER VI

“I Have Found God”

REV. 21:7: “And I shall be his God and he shall be my son!”

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

“I took a day to search for God:
I saw his footprints in the sod.”

—*Bliss Carman.*

Revelation is full of God.

That bombarding book is a revelation of God.

John has found God. That is as apparent as a waterfall thundering down a mountainside; that is as apparent as a streak of lightning in the night; that is as apparent as a mountain peak. John has found God.

And he has found all that pertains to God. He has found the Holy City. That Holy City, that Celestial Abode, is as apparent and as beautiful as the immaculate whiteness of a Mt. Blanc under a broadside of sunlight. John has found the Holy City.

John has found Jesus the Christ in this book of Revelation.

Christ walks its pages. Christ walks up and down its celestial valley and over its mountain white trails

and peaks. You see God standing like a lonely sentinel at sunset on a mountain peak against a crimson sunset and he does not seem unreal like some dream or vision. He seems made of flesh and blood and spirit.

John has sought and found the Footsteps of God everywhere on this vision island of Patmos.

Once Robinson Crusoe was thrilled and amazed to find the footprints of a man walking across his island, that island on which he thought he was alone forever. These footprints thrilled his soul for they meant human companionship.

The other day in far-off China and in nearer Utah an explorer found the footprints of a great mastodon, one of the prehistoric animals, and those footprints had been preserved through all these intervening ages, because this great beast had tramped his tremendous weight down into a substance like cement and that had hardened and preserved for all ages the footprints of that extinct animal. To say that these explorers were thrilled is to say but a little thing. That was the great event of their lives.

But what is that to the thrill of the adventuring soul who finds the footprints of the eternal God along the world's wide ways? Nothing!

We are all explorers in Eternity, seeking—not the Garden of Eden, not the origin of the human race, not some new land, some new peak, some new river of doubt; we be explorers into Eternity seeking the footprints of God in order that we may follow where he leads; follow him out into the Eternal reaches. That is the great sublime human task.

And the glorious part of it is that if we seek for God we shall find him; for that is the promise to us; that is the reiterated promise to us; the promise of all ages of the ageless Book—God's Bible; that if we seek him we shall find him; that, if we knock it shall be opened unto us; that, if we truly desire him, we shall come upon his trail everywhere.

We are not on a fruitless quest when we, with earnest hearts seek after God's footprints. That is why we sing this day with increased joy in our immortal souls:

"I took a day to search for God;
I found his footprints in the sod."

HE WHO SEEKS GOD WILL FIND HIM SURELY

That is the promise of the Bible and that is the promise of experience.

Dr. Philip Cabot in "Except Ye Be Born Again," a remarkable book on spiritual things, has a chapter called, "Answer or Echo," in which he tells of being lost in the woods while on a hunting trip. He says:

"The terror that grips your heart when you have lost your way in some vast wilderness and stand face to face with death for the first time is a savage thing. Panic will then overwhelm you like a flood: you will know desperation and a wild unreasoning fear."

But, says Dr. Cabot, this terror is as nothing to the terror of a human soul which suddenly realizes that it is lost from God; that it cannot find its way

back to the God from whence it came. The terror of being lost in a woods is nothing compared to the terror of being lost from God.

“But if your cry is heartfelt; if you have been thoroughly beaten and sufficiently humbled to make your surrender complete, your cry will be answered. No human soul ever uttered the genuine call to God for help and went unanswered. Be sure of that! An answer will come if your call is earnest. ‘Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you.’”

Then Dr. Cabot gives a thrilling illustration of what he means by calling in his experience as a hunter calling moose:

“I practiced often and acquired skill in the art of ‘calling’ moose at night. The ‘call’ is made on a birchbark horn (like a megaphone) in imitation of the lowing of the cow moose. It can only succeed when no breath of wind is stirring and only in the autumn woods. In order that the ‘call’ may carry as far, it is usual to take your canoe to the middle of a lake (after the sun and wind have gone to bed) and spend the night there. The hunter ‘calls’ about twice an hour and then listens with intent alertness to every sound. He will hear an owl hoot miles away, and a deer walking on the game trail, or a dead tree fall with a crash; perhaps a bear may wander across the hillside, or a wolf howl to his friend; and strange little puffs of wind will arise suddenly on the mountainside, and as suddenly die away. All these sounds he notes but disregards. They are not the sound he is seeking. And, then, if

you are fortunate, after hours of listening you may hear the answer to your call. It will be very faint at first, and you will often doubt its reality; for it is like the faintest echo of your call, and, only by intense concentration can you be sure of it.

"But, if you mean business, and if you listen and observe intelligently, you will feel a sympathetic vibration in your own soul to the voice of the Father. It is like the musical harmonic or overtone; a string in your own soul will vibrate in response to the answer of your God. It will be faint but unmistakable. No true penitent will remain long in doubt. You will know you have been answered because the whole framework of you will be set vibrating."

Just recently a little girl has written a book of poems. She was only twelve when that book was written and there is some beautiful imagery and poetry in the book. One quatrain that has never left my heart and which illustrates the present thought is:

"I want to be a lady,
I want to stand, serene,
But my feet are always dancing
To a far-off tambourine."

So we all listen for God—and we seek for his 'footsteps—when we are lost and we seek with a certain passion—and, when we seek we have a knowledge, as certain as that passion to find him, that we shall find him. "Seek and ye shall find," was not a careless word dropped from the lips of a Jester,

but a word of love, dropped from the lips of an ever-seeking Father heart, lonely for his lost children; lost and loved.

And, so, with that consciousness in my soul I shall go out this day seeking for my God—seeking for his footsteps everywhere—searching like a lost child searches for its father—searching with a certain panic in my soul, searching for God with an intense passion; listening for his call—his answer to my cry, like one listens for a loved voice; seeking—and knowing all the while that I shall find his footsteps:

“I took a day to search for God;
I saw His footsteps in the sod.”

ONE OF THE FOOTPRINTS OF GOD IS HUMAN INSTINCT

Some writer says: “Remember that in your search for God your instinct is older than your reason and wiser.”

Then he backs up his statement with a quotation from the great good book of beautiful things: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not on thine own understandings.” (Proverbs 3:15.)

What does that mean?

It means that we are to follow God with our hearts; to find him with our instincts.

We do not reason out love-things anyhow.

We do not select our wives by the reasoning process.

It is a sort of sight-unseen business with us. Or, at least, it seems that is the way we select a wife.

But the simple truth is that we select a wife with our instincts and those instincts are usually unerring.

Whenever we begin to calculate about love, and friendship, then we lose the subtle essence of these spiritual gifts from God.

The most precious things of human life we do by instinct. We select our wives, our friends, our destiny by instinct.

The kind of friends that we select these days for business reasons, or for the sake of political advancement or preference, are flimsy friendships. Too much of that is done these days. But such friendships do not last. They are like the house which was built on the sands; and the first storm that came, over it went, with heartache and heartbreak within.

"He fell in love," is a phrase that we often hear. And that is a phrase which exactly describes what we do. We do actually "fall" in love. We are walking along the trail of life, and a distant object catches our eyes. It is a girl, a sweet girl with rosy cheeks, and bright eyes, and red lips, and a gracious way with her. She is so beautiful that we cannot keep our eyes off of her and we walk along the trail of youth with our eyes on that girl and not watching the pathway and suddenly we are like a traveler who falls into a deep abyss. We DO "fall in love." And in spite of the way that sounds, it is just as God intended it. He meant that we should fall in love. He meant, in other words, that we should follow our unerring instincts in the selection of a mate for life. God's purposes could best be

served in that way. For the Instinct is older than Reason and it is better trained to select.

I think that few people join a church with an ulterior purpose.

Some do, but few do. Many join lodges purposely to advance their standing and to increase their friendships, and to help their business. It is unworthy, but it is true. But few join a church in that way. They join through their instincts. A person is at church, hears a sermon that stirs the deeper emotions. Old memories come flooding back. And that person is impelled to say to the preacher, "I want to join the church. I want to find God."

That is that man's or that woman's instinct at work as God intended it should work.

"Love at first sight," is another phrase which describes Instinct at work in the human soul. And, as for me, I have seldom seen cases of this kind that did not last longer than friendships or love that was calculated—weighed, balanced, on the scales of Reason.

"He plays by ear," is another phrase that indicates Instinct at work in a human soul. Add training and technique to that boy who can "play by ear" and you have the essence of a musical genius.

So we love God "by ear"; so we fall in love with God at first sight; so we seek by Instinct for God. That is the best way and that is the truest way.

One of the deepest instincts of humanity is the Religious Instinct. There are several deeply buried instincts in the human soul: the Hunger Instinct, the Sex Instinct and the God Instinct.

And without doubt the deepest buried of all of the instincts is the instinct to find God which is in a human soul.

Dr. Cabot, the author of "Except Ye Be Born Again," even goes so far as to give us the mechanics of finding God through instinct.

He says that there is a technique in finding God.

Relax. Throw yourself into the arms of God. Any hunter will tell you that, when listening for game sounds by day or night you must be, at once relaxed and concentrated. Overanxiety will fill your ears with imaginary noises; lack of concentration will degenerate into drowsiness. To the hunter listening for moose both are alike fatal to success. It is the same with the eye strained to distinguish a distant object. If the eye muscles become rigid the eye will not focus. So with the soul when listening for 'the still small voice.' You must be completely relaxed but not drowsy, perfectly intent, but with an open, almost vacant mind. Lying flat upon your bed without a pillow in the early dawn is a method in common use, and many of us find help in a 'Listening Place' or sanctuary consecrated to practices of worship—a church.'

His second suggestion is that "In preparing the instincts of the soul for worship the beauty of the natural world is priceless. All of you have seen the face of a friend lit up by the scent of a flower or felt the inspiration of a sunset or of the starlit sky. It is not an accident that prophetic inspiration has been most common in desert lands where men lived much under the open heavens, for such conditions

unquestionably help to tune the soul to the voice of the Father."

Every soul naturally hungers after God. We found that in Bojer's "The Great Hunger." Nothing will satisfy that instinct but finding God.

When you take your day to seek for God he is not far to find. His first footstep you will find in your instinctive hunger for God.

"I took a day to search for God;
I found his footsteps in the sod."

In simple words we find the footprints of God in our own souls first of all and that is the first place to look—and the surest place.

WE FIND THE FOOTPRINTS OF GOD IN THE WORLD OF NATURE

Some of my intimates who are always wanting me to be perfect are cautioning me about introducing too much nature in my sermons.

They mean well but they do not know much.

As Dr. Cabot says it is not by chance that the great Prophets and Biblical Seers came from deserts and places where people live always in the world of Nature.

My friends who caution me do not know much—at least they do not know too much—because they forget that the Bible, as I have said before—is a great Book of Nature. And there's a reason for

that. It is a great Book of Nature because God is out there in the world of Nature. That's where we find his footprints.

I do not mean his footprints in the fern that an older æon dropped in the mud. I do not mean his fossil footprints. I do not mean the forest of carbon which he laid down for humanity. I do not mean his Grand Canyons, his Yellowstones, his Yosemites, his great footprints of beauty and wonderment.

I mean something more subtle than that.

I mean, that no man, no matter how dull he may be, can go out into the world of Nature alone and not feel the presence of God.

James Oliver Curwood has written a little book which he calls, "God's Country."

He sent me a copy with his autograph.

In its opening pages he tells of a dear friend who lost his wife and who was so stricken that he did not want to live any longer.

Curwood took this friend from his solitary grieving and led him to a Sanctuary of Nature.

"Fred, I am going to show you the most wonderful city. Come with me quietly."

When they came to the edge of the woods and sat down, Mr. Curwood said:

"Now, just to humor me, be very still. Don't move, don't speak—just listen."

It was three o'clock in the afternoon; that magic hour when the world of nature is most beautiful, and soon a beautiful silence fell.

The silence was broken by the ripple of a brook,

the hum of life in the insect world, and the singing of birds.

A great quiet and a deep peace fell upon the soul of this stricken friend after a while.

A woodpecker hammered at an old stump.

A warbler burst into a beautiful song.

A half mile away a crow cawed.

A fox-squirrel barked nearer at hand.

A colony of black ants was building a house against a fortress of an old log.

A pair of blackbirds had a nest near at hand with their young cheeping in its cozy softness.

On a slender swale a bobolink was singing.

A land turtle lumbered through the brush back into the water.

A score of toads were teaching their tiny youngsters to swim. "My friend laughed when he saw the little fellows clinging to their mothers' backs. He laughed for the first time in many months."

As they walked out of that sanctuary Curwood said to his friend:

"You have seen just one-ten-thousandth of what Nature holds for you and every man and woman. You haven't believed in God very strongly. But you've got to now. That's GOD back there in the wood!"

Mr. Curwood is right. At least those were the footprints of God back there in the woods.

Men have always found God in Nature.

The Prophets did; David did; Isaiah did "in the still small voice;" John the Baptist did; Jesus did; the Disciples did—and John on Patmos.

I need not say again that in every great event, every great character, every crisis, every great teaching, every great and popular chapter of the Bible—from Moses to John on Patmos—from Genesis to Revelation, from “In the Beginning” to “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen!”—the Bible is a Nature Book.

If you want to find one of the deeply buried footprints of God go to the World of Nature. Go in the spring time, go in the summer, go in the fall time, go in the winter. The footprints of God are there at all seasons.

I preach Nature so much, I introduce it into so many sermons, because I have discovered that this is the one way to God; that in Nature are found the footprints of God. If I am a good guide to God I will lead you often by this trail—by the trail where I know that God may be found. The man who is a false prophet is the preacher who does not talk about God in Nature, who does not lead you by this trail. I have found the way and I want you to find it too. Therefore, you will always find me leading you by that trail to God. His footprints are there.

There is no medicine that is so quieting to troubled souls as getting out into the World of Nature, especially these beautiful days of autumn.

You can test it yourself. Just go out and sit down where you can hear the ripple of a stream; the wind in the trees; the singing of a bird; the whisper of Nature—and I'll wager you my life that you will feel God around that place, and you will come

back with a great peace on your soul as did the stricken friend of Mr. Curwood.

“For God is out there in that woods; God is there beside that valley; God is there in the stillness of the twilight; God is there under that flaming maple tree; God is there beside the still waters of the stream; God is there always and everywhere.”

“I took a day to search for God;
I saw his footprints in the sod.”

I know of nothing that I can recommend to my people better than to take a day off and go into the fields and woods to search for God.

In this busy, burly, blustering, belligerent life we need to take a day off now and then and search for God in God’s great world of Nature.

I wondered if this thought that I had about God being found in Nature was true and I have had it confirmed by others in addition to my own experiences. Mrs. Drew, one of our old members of St. Mark’s, passed through a great affliction in the long sickness and death of her husband. She fought this fight out alone as many a woman has done before.

As she told it to me in her own language: “I had about come to the end of my resources, my patience, even my religion. I was rebellious at God and at everybody and everything. My nerves were raw, my body was tired, my spirit was sick with anxiety and uncertainty.

“It had been a long hard day in that sick room and in my soul. I had been alone so long. God

seemed so far away because of my physical weariness and my spiritual anxiety. I did not seem to feel him near at all. My soul was tossing like a stormy sea. I was one great surge of restlessness and uncertainty and doubt within and without.

"I had occasion, although not intentionally, to go out into the yard to hang up some bedclothes to dry and when I walked out I walked into a beautiful sunset. It was a peaceful, quiet sunset of red and gold. It was so beautiful that I stopped for a moment to look at it.

"Then suddenly a great peace stole into my soul and I was at rest with myself, my troubles and my God. An infinite calm came over me as I gazed into the beauty of God through that sunset. He seemed very near to me then. The evening came on apace and as it came with all of its solemn silence, it came like the benediction of God to my soul. From that minute on, although the trial continued, I was at peace with the world and with my God. I had seen God in the sunset. He was there."

Jack Crawford, the Scout Poet, says:

"Do I like the city, stranger? 'Tisn't likely that I would;
'Tisn't likely that a ranger from the border ever could
Git accustomed to the flurry, an' the loud unearthly noise—
Everybody in a hurry, men an' wimmen, gals an' boys,
All a-rushin' like the nation 'mid the rumble an' the jar,
Jes' as if their souls' salvation hung upon gittin' thar.

Like it? No. I love to wander
'Mid the vales an' mountains green,
In the borderland out yonder
Whar the hand o' God is seen.

Nothin' here but bricks and mortar, towerin' overhead so high

That you never see-a quarter of the overhangin' sky,
Not a tree or grassy medder, not a runnin' brook in sight,
Nothin' but the buildin's' shadder makin' gloom of Heaven's light.

E'en the birds are all imported from away acrost the sea—
Faces meet me all distorted with the hand of misery.

Like it? No. I love to wander
'Mid the vales an' mountains green,
In the borderland out yonder
Whar the hand o' God is seen."

WE FIND GOD'S FOOTPRINTS IN POETRY

This sermon might be a setting forth of a preacher's life-philosophy. He brings you the World of Nature and he brings you the world of poetry. He brings it to you by reading the great thoughts of the great ancient and modern poets in prayer meeting and church service. He prints it in your bulletin each week and enriches your lives by that much.

I do not see how a preacher could live in the Bible and in any way with God and not know that God is in the world of poetry, just as he is in the World of Nature. God's footprints are all over the fields of verse and poetry. God has walked with poets much and overmuch all these years.

That is why all real poets are also real preachers.

Outside of the Bible, poetry is the richest source of sermonic suggestion and of illustration. The

preacher who does not mine this vault of rich gold is a fool. He would be just like a man who is dying of thirst who came upon a spring of cool running water in the desert and refused to drink. He would be like a man who was searching in the Klondike for gold and came upon a pile of nuggets and refused to lift them from the ground.

Poetry is, as I have mentioned heretofore, the language of the spiritual. The Bible has proven this. The vehicle of the spiritual is poetry. God talks his language in poetry, imagery, symbol, and parable. Christ soon learned that the poetry of a parable was the easiest way to reach the hearts of people.

That is the reason why people instinctively love poetry. That is the reason why your hearts are subdued by poetry. Any public speaker will soon learn if his soul is sensitive to the reactions of human beings that people will respond more quickly to beautiful poetry than to anything else. Human hearts answer back to poetry.

The most eloquent preachers I know have been preachers who have known that God's footprints are found in the field of poetry. Bishop Quayle knew this and used it to a powerful degree. He who quotes a beautiful verse serves as much as he who wrote that verse.

Alfred Noyes was talking about that subtle power; that sense of charm; that subduing influence of poetry on the human soul when he said:

"Always in poetry, there is that extraordinary

sense, elusive sometimes as a fragrance, of the presence—I know not what else to call it—of the Eternal.”

Alfred Noyes says that he does not know what that elusive thing is. I know. I will tell him. It is God. God’s footprints are there, and when we see God’s footprints in the sod we are subdued to awe, like Robinson Crusoe was when he found the footprints in the sand of his desert island. When we find God’s footprints we know it, we feel it.

“Break, break, break
On thy cold gray stones, O sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

Oh, well for the fisherman’s boy
That he shouts with his sister at play ;
Oh, well for the sailor lad
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
To the haven under the hill,
But, oh, for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still !”

Poetry, says Alfred Noyes, poetry as illustrated in this stately rhythmic verse brings the human soul into harmony with :

The Pulsations of the Universe,
The swinging tides,
Moving ships,
The beating heart of man.

I quote Noyes again when he speaks of Tennyson:

✓ "Tennyson does not need to say: 'Here is God!' or 'There is God!' 'Here is the Eternal!' or, 'There is the Eternal!' But, 'Lo, everywhere is God and everywhere is the Eternal!'"

We see God's footprints in poetry, for poetry is beautiful and God is the essence of the beautiful.

Renan says:

"Man, when confronted with things that are good, beautiful and true, transcends himself, and, yielding to the celestial charm, annihilates his own sorry personality, and rises to sublime heights of spiritual rapture. What is this state if it is not worship?"

"I took a day to search for God;
I found his footsteps in the sod."

And when I walked in the Elysian fields of poetry
I heard the echo of God's voice: "And I shall be his
God and he shall be my son."

WE FIND GOD'S FOOTPRINTS IN THE BIBLE

The Bible is full of the footprints of God.

If we are truly in earnest about following God and finding God we must search for him in the beautiful fields, lowlands, hilltops and trails that run through the Bible.

The Bible is a Divine landscape.

The Bible has rivers running through it. There are beautiful fields everywhere in the Bible. These fields run up to meet the little hills in the Bible.

These hills in turn climb to ridges of mountain ranges and peaks. There are wild trails all over these hills and mountains and peaks. There are trails along these rivers through the Bible. There are trails of God that cross these deserts of the Bible and run along the seas of the Bible, and God has walked these trails and if we would follow God, the Bible is tramped down with his footprints.

One cannot get lost in his search for God if he sticks to the Bible.

One is never out of sight of the fresh tracks of God in the Bible—the ever-changing tracks of God.

One could speak specifically and say that wherever David walks there were footprints of God because God and David walked together.

One could say that everywhere there is word about Isaiah and everywhere Isaiah walked there are footprints of God because God and Isaiah walked together and they left a trail behind them.

One could speak specifically and say that everywhere that Paul walked we can find the footprints of God, because in his journey to Damascus God was with him, and suddenly Paul saw God's footprints in the road, and he heard God's voice and it knocked him down. God's presence was there like a blazing sun or a flash of lightning and Paul was never the same after that—not even his name. God walked with Paul there on that highway and ever after that. In his missionary journeys God walked with him and you will find God's great footprints beside Paul's lesser footprints—but there just the same.

God walks with Paul like a father walks with his child, through the snow and through the sand and through life, and you will see the big footprints of God and the lesser footprints of Paul and you know you can always find God's footprints side by side with Paul's.

And you can always find the footprints of God where Jesus walked and you can always hear God's voice where Jesus is in the Bible. Mistake not that truth. If you want to find the footprints of God seek the trail that Jesus trod and there beside the footprints of Jesus you will find the footprints of the Father.

From Bethlehem's manger to Calvary's cross and on beyond that to the Resurrection Tomb—and on beyond that to the Hill of Ascension, and on beyond that when Jesus took the sky-trails back—God's footprints are there, side by side with the footprints of Jesus.

So if you want to find the footprints of God you will have to find the footprints of Jesus, for Jesus said: "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." "And no man cometh unto the Father but by me." What he meant was that no man could find a trace of God, no man could find the footprints of God, save he find the footprints of Jesus.

"I took a day to search for God;
I found his footsteps in the sod."

CHAPTER VII

I am Unconquerable!

PSALM 8:5: "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor!"

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

"Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can—
I am God's soul, fused in the soul of man!"

—*Ella Heath.*

There is something indomitable, unconquerable, undying, in a human soul!

When I think of a human soul I think of Gibraltar, El Capitan, Mt. Everest or Mt. Shasta.

I think of these because they are almost, not quite—almost unconquerable—while the human soul is absolutely unconquerable! Even Mt. Everest will be conquered; and that right soon.

Some one has recently said that the greatest miracle about conquering Mt. Everest was the miracle of the men who tried it.

Gibraltar is no longer impregnable. The late war taught us that. But human souls, fused with God, are still impregnable.

No great physical thing on earth has withstood the undaunted spirit of man. The north pole, the

south pole, the seas, turbulent as they are, have all been conquered by the spirit of mankind.

And now that great miracle of the circumnavigation of the earth has come to pass, and it has been a great thing to be alive in that great day when our American aviators have flown around the earth.

This circumnavigation of the globe will go down in history, with as great a place as Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe. The sea has been conquered by man, the earth has been conquered, and now man has conquered—or, is on the way to complete mastery of—the air itself, that medium which the ancients always thought was outside of the range of man's wildest, widest dreams and ambitions.

It was a thrilling moment to me when, with some friends, I welcomed the American aviators to London at Croydon Field. I felt that I was standing at that moment in the footprints of the history of all time. At that moment I was at the crossroads of a great Epoch.

We had heard that our American aviators would cross the English channel that morning from Paris. They had started from California and had flown over two-thirds of the earth, and were now on the last lap in the first circumnavigation of the globe.

We went to Croydon Field where they were to land in England.

We arrived just a few minutes before they did. Thousands of people peered into the cloudy skies toward the channel. A rift in the clouds appeared as if by a miracle, and through that rift five planes sailed. The first started off toward London. It

was a commercial plane taking pictures. The second which was an escort plane remained in the air until the Americans had landed.

The three American planes circled the field three times, as is the tradition, and then gracefully swept down, like great gulls landing on the smooth waters of the sea. It was a hilarious thing to witness. It was an epoch in the world history. One felt that he was standing at the focus of aviation progress. I had the honor of being the first to grasp the hands of these fine, pioneering Americans. I was under the big planes before the propellers had stopped and got my pockets and shoes filled with dirt for my pains, but I also got my soul filled with happiness and joy to be the first to welcome my own pioneering compatriots back on the soil of English speaking peoples, for the first time since they had launched their great ships from American shores on their perilous voyage through the air.

That is the spirit I want to flame forth in this sermon—that indomitable something in all mankind which makes man know that God has made him just a little lower than the angels and has crowned him with glory and honor, so that, in his soul of souls, he has a God-given right to sing:

“Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can;
I am God’s soul, fused in the soul of man!”

That is the great truth: I am God’s soul fused in the soul of man. I am a part of God and God is a

part of me. I am spirit of his spirit; dream of his dream.

We often look upon a great ancestor with great pride. Sturdy, true, a valiant leader; a pioneer; a great preacher, doctor, prophet; and we say in that pride: "I am bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh."

We look to our parents with pride; true and tried; clean and fine; strong and respected; and we love them, and we say with reverence: "Blood of their blood; bone of their bone."

But we say this holy morning, with the flush of a tremendous idea lighting up our souls: "I am the spirit of God's spirit; dream of his dream."

"Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can;

I am God's soul fused in the soul of man."

THE BIBLE GIVES US A RIGHT TO THAT CONCEIT O' OURSELVES

God evidently meant us to feel that foolish way.

God was more afraid of our being so full of fear, and worry, and doubt than he was that we would run away with ourselves evidently; for he shot his Book of Instructions to us full of this business of making us know that we were made only a little lower than the angels.

I, for one, do not believe that he would have talked so much about a thing that he did not feel was supremely important.

Man is more prone to sink than he is to rise.

Man is by instincts prone to stay near the mud.

God knew all of this about us and in the spirit of this Book of Instructions he printed red line after red line, telling us that he meant us to be somebody.

I had a man come into St. Mark's for a Sunday evening service a few weeks ago and after it was all over he said to me, trying to express his appreciation of our service: "Why, I feel as if I'd been some place!"

That is the way we feel when we get through reading the Bible—just the part that has to do with this symphonic theme and its regnant idea. We feel as if we human beings had been somewhere. We feel as if God had taken us some place.

A while ago my daughter and I had a rather human experience. Whether or not we were right we were for a certain man to be elected Mayor of Detroit. We had gone on record in that stand and it was not exactly a popular stand. But she was loyal to me and I was loyal to her. But particularly was she loyal to me. She had been tested. I had not talked much with her, nor had I tried to influence her opinion but she had heard her Daddy talk about this man so much that she was for him.

The morning of election day I got home from a lecture trip long after Betty had gone to her school. Our man had won. I had a speaking engagement at noon and wouldn't get to see her to rejoice together so I stopped at her school just to get a kiss and to see her and to talk it over for a minute.

I said when I got there: "I just stopped to talk over our victory together. It was great, wasn't it?"

It was a little thing but all day long she talked about it to her mother in these words: "And just to think that Daddy stopped just to talk it over with me!"

I stopped because I love her, and she is my child, and I was happy for her loyalty to me.

So God stops to talk it all over with us in his book, the Bible, and he loves us so much and believes in us so much and considers us so important that he made us only a little lower than the angels and he has crowned us with glory and honor. No wonder we are happy to read about the way he trusts us and loves us and believes in us.

Just texts alone ought to thrill us.

Psalm 34: 7 sings the truth of God's confidence in us:

"The angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Psalm 27: 3 sings another message from God telling us that we are invincible because he is our God and fused in us:

"Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident!"

Isaiah 41: 10 shouts it out:

"Fear thou not for I am with thee!"

Go back again to Psalm 27 and the first verse and have your soul shot through with the electrical discharge of God's confidence in us:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear; The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Answer: **NOBODY!** There's nobody to fear and there's nobody of whom we should be afraid!

"Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can—
I am God's soul fused in the soul of man!"

Get that into your soul, human beings! That is God's word—not mine alone!

And now to what God has given man dominion over. The eighth Psalm tells it all:

First: "Over the works of thy hands." That means that man is master of floods, torrents, lightnings, mountain peaks, glaciers, avalanches, oceans, stars; everything that God has made. Man is Master over the works of God's hands.

Second: "Thou hast put all things under his feet!"

Not content with the first phrase of that great Psalm God makes it stronger by painting a picture of man triumphant over all things. We have seen paintings depicting in art one who has been a victor over his enemy, standing with his foot on that enemy in the posture of the conqueror. That is the kind of a picture that God paints in that phrase: "Thou hast put all things under his feet."

Our war-phrase, "I'm on top of the world," was born of just such confidence. That was what won the war; that spirit in the soul of America. We were standing on top of the world because God put us there!

Third: "All sheep, and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field."

The earth is man's and the fullness thereof. God evidently intends that—that man shall be master of the earth. I remember that this phrase came to me as we climbed the marvelous mountain peak, the Jungfrau, up, up, up that cog-railway—past the fields, dotted with cattle, and sheep, beautiful to look upon; and as we climbed I remembered this phrase not only because the symbol of man's mastery was present on the mountain sides in those sheep and cattle, reminiscent of this line from the Psalm, but because man's mastery of the earth was symbolized in that achievement of engineers, that railroad to the top of Jungfrau, through solid granite the last half hour's journey, conquering glaciers that were æons old when the workers put through that road—for a half hour through darkness and granite—at last to emerge twelve thousand feet at the top of Jungfrau. I never before knew the meaning of that phrase:

"Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field."

Fourth: "The fowl of the air."

It didn't use to be so. Sure enough, with our guns, we could kill the fowl of the air and with our traps we could trap the fowl of the air. But now we have flown into the playgrounds of the fowl of the air; we have searched out the hiding place of the eagle. No bird now flies as high as man flies.

Fifth: "And the fish of the sea."

The deeps of the sea used to be impossible to us. But now we go down and down five hundred feet—and we sound the bottom of the seas, and we send our submarines down and travel with impunity in the deeps of the sea, and we chart the highways of the sea—and we know that we know. It is no longer a mystery. Its currents have been harnessed by science; its deeps have been sounded; its precincts have been invaded by diver and submarine.

The eighth Psalm is man's Charter of Authority.

When we go to take possession of a new task or a new achievement, we go with letters of introduction, letters of credit, letters of power. We hand those letters over and from that time on nobody disputes our rights to authority and dominion.

So this Psalm is our letter of credit. It is our authority. It gives us dominion over land, sea and sky. And when we get through reading this Psalm we get up and start out to conquer the world in the name of God. We start out singing in our souls:

“Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can;
I am God's soul fused in the soul of man!”

“If the Lord be for me who can be against me?”
The Bible asks that question.

Answer: “Nobody!”

That is the reason why I am unconquerable! That is why a Christian “needeth not to be afraid.”

Every character in the Bible is shot through with this spirit. They knew. Moses, against impossible odds of material power and tradition stood out

against the aristocracy of his day, against the Pharaoh's armies because God was with him; stood out when there were bickerings within his own ranks, when traitors assailed him and wanted him to turn back to captivity and he conquered because he knew that he was impregnable. Why? Because he was doing God's will and God's work.

David went out against the giant Goliath; went out unafraid, went out with confidence in his soul; went out to battle for right, and God was with him; and he licked a giant because he knew in his soul that he was unconquerable. David is the hero of ten thousand little fellows who have big fights to wage and great odds to overcome—because he whipped a giant. Anybody can whip a giant—a giant of defeat, a giant of wrong, a giant of sin, a giant of doubt, a giant of fear, a giant of sickness—aye—even a giant of death if they know that God is with them.

Men beckon me everywhere in the Old Testament to call their names in this roll of the unconquerable. Prophets who went unto Kings and told Kings to their faces that they sinned and that God would demand a reckoning; prophets who made demands for God on their day and generation—on the Kings who ruled them—prophets who dared and died for God. The Old Testament is a “National Portrait Gallery” of heroism.

In London there is the “National Portrait Gallery” filled with the portraits of the great of England. It is fascinating to visit. But the Bible is a world portrait gallery, from Moses to Jesus and

Paul, a gallery of men and women who dared face Kings and Priests and indict them to their faces; even a John the Baptist who dared to point a King's sins out to his own face and to the public; men who dared to live and die, knowing all the while that:

"Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can—
I am God's soul fused in the soul of man!"

SOME OF THE THINGS THAT MAN HAS CONQUERED
WITHIN AND WITHOUT

Conquering the Things Without

A while ago I read in a magazine the thrilling story of a surgeon who had been fighting cancer for ten years. He had a terribly malignant cancer growth himself, which was on his face and finally got to his throat and ate its way into his bronchial tubes. But during all this time he was studying this terrible foe of mankind. During these trying hard years of suffering, with death only a few steps away, hovering over him as he worked, this brave fellow—like many a brave surgeon before him—submitting to seventeen operations under the knife, trying to make it possible for a human being suffering with cancer not to submit to the knife—studied to prove to humankind and to science that the radium treatment would cure not only external cancers, but also cancers of the stomach and bowels. His was one of the most glorious illustrations I have ever heard of the indomitable, unconquerable spirit of mankind.

In another magazine in the same week I read a story entitled "Freeing Mankind from Disease." It read like romance to me. It had adventure, thrill, blood-curdling dramatics—and yet it was just the everyday story of the indomitable spirit of mankind working to conquer disease and death.

This article started out by saying that for more than 2400 years the human heart was beyond the surgeon's knife.

Here was a region man could not penetrate. Here was an operation man dared not attempt.

But man did attempt it and man attempted it successfully until now an operation on the beating, pulsing heart is not an uncommon thing in surgical history.

On May 20th, 1923, two doctors, Cutler and Levine, exposed a beating human heart, thrust a slender knife through its wall and made a cut like a buttonhole only larger. They did this in order to make a larger opening for blood to course through. The girl was a patient twelve years of age and all her life she had sat day and night propped up on pillows because when she moved the blood backed up into her lungs and choked her.

The doctors knew what the trouble was and they knew what they ought to do to correct that trouble. But for a long time they dared not attempt thrusting a knife through the walls of this delicate organ.

Then that old indomitable spirit of daring swept over them. And they dared this operation.

The operation was not guesswork. They tried a long series of experiments on animals and were suc-

cessful. The operation was successful. The girl eight months later was up and walking about. Surgeons now take a heart out, expose it, and sew up wounds in it after removing bullets.

As recently as 1924 the world was informed that scarlet fever had been conquered by mankind. Man has discovered a serum, a few drops of which administered early will absolutely conquer this heretofore dreadful disease. If the serum is administered early a cure will come from within twelve to twenty-four hours. For several years we have known that any child given a preventative dose of serum may be made absolutely immune from diphtheria and now within the last few months science has discovered immunity from scarlet fever also.

Every single organ of the human body is now within reach of the surgeon.

Surgeons now operate on the lungs at will—that part of the body which was the last to capitulate to man's mind and daring.

Hydrophobia is curable with certainty now.

Five mothers out of every one hundred used to die of childbed fever. This within the memory of one surgeon. To-day in one experimental series, 8,373 cases were watched and not a single mother lost her life through this former dreadful enemy. Man has conquered.

Lockjaw, typhoid fever, and former scourges of war have been cut down. The death rate of the Spanish-American War was 90 percent and the World War practically nothing. Man is conquering!

Then came insulin! Formerly with sugar in the blood, diabetes was incurable. When that dreadful enemy of mankind got a place behind the walls of man's fortifications it was impossible to dislodge him. But now, due to the discovery of insulin, man may be brought back from a state of coma to life. In fact I have an uncle, the man for whom I am named, who a year ago was in an automobile accident. He was a diabetic. He was in coma for twenty-four hours. Five years ago he would have been dead. But man has conquered. Injections of insulin checked the disease and to-day he is up and about and I am in regular correspondence with him. Man has conquered.

Pneumonia is no longer King. Science has discovered a serum that will make mankind immune to pneumonia, which for untold centuries—from the days of the Pharaohs—has taken its awful toll of humanity. Man has conquered!

Why this conquering spirit in the soul of mankind? From whence cometh it into his soul?

Answer:

“Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can—
I am God’s soul fused in the soul of man!”

Conquering the Things Within

Some of the things that man has to fight within his own soul are, Fear, Worry, the devastating effects of Disappointment, Criticism, Sickness, and the inevitable coming of Death.

Always hovering in the background of the average human being's mind are those enemies within. They haunt us like ghosts. They hover about us like our shadows. They are closer than black breathing pestilences.

We are afraid of our own weaknesses; we fear to face life's problems; we fear defeat; we fear our neighbors; we fear the opinion of the world; we fear depression in business. It is said that one half of the world fears the other half.

The black man fears the white man; the Japanese fears the Caucasian; the ignorant man fears the educated man; the laboring man fears the capitalist; the farmer fears the city man; the world is filled with black, ignorant fear. That is something within us.

We spend nine-tenths of our time being afraid of what somebody will say about us. We dread criticism. We worry about what our neighbor thinks about us; what our lodge brothers think about us; what our political enemies think about us.

We worry over something in our lives that may arise to besmirch us.

We dread sickness and the inevitable coming of death.

But it is absolutely possible—under God's providence—for a man to become so much one with him that neither fear, nor criticism, nor disappointment, nor foes, nor fate, nor sickness, nor death may master him.

God meant for man, made in his image, to be so supreme, so impregnable that nothing in Heaven,

or Earth, or Hell should worry him, or make him afraid, or conquer him.

That is God's plan for man.

And when man keeps his record clean; when man keeps close to God; when a man lives a life wherein God is fused into his own soul, that man is absolutely impregnable.

There was a railroad wreck. An old engineer was driving the train. Two great engines were crushed to pieces, and they found John Bull, an aged and respected engineer, underneath the wreck, more broken than his engine piled over him. The doctor hastily opened his emergency case and pulled out whiskey to give it to John Bull, the old engineer.

He held it to the lips of the engineer. The old man lifted his white hand to wait a minute.

"Smell my breath before I take that whiskey. I want you to be sure that I was not drinking, for about all an engineer has is his record, and he must keep that clean!"

A clean record, a clean mind, a clean soul, a clean program, honest motives, a great deep genuine sincerity make any man impregnable.

No matter what mistakes he may make in strategy, in politics, in program, if his motives are clean and his purposes pure, if he has a clean record, he has no need to fear men, God or angels, for all the world is working for him. He is invincible! He is impregnable!

The courage that Theodore Roosevelt had was the courage of an inner purity of purpose.

When Abraham Lincoln called his Cabinet together during the terrible days of the Civil War to read to them the Emancipation Proclamation he had to stand alone. The new picture on Lincoln makes this scene most vivid. There stood Lincoln alone. His Cabinet was not sympathetic to this new move. The time was not ripe. It would cause further bloodshed. But Lincoln had what we call "the courage of his convictions" and he issued that proclamation alone.

What does that phrase, "the courage of his convictions," actually mean?

That means that a man is listening to God, the God that is fused within him, and when that God talks to him—that part of him talks to him that is God in him—and when he has God talking to him and leading him, he is impregnable.

This phrase means that a man is listening to a voice within his own soul, and when he does that he listens to the voice of all ages, and he summons the eternal powers to his aid, and he calls to spiritual arms the marching hosts of the skies.

Another wonderful picture in the Abraham Lincoln film is the picture of that terrible moment when Lincoln summons North America to war after the shot is fired on Fort Sumter, the Stars and Stripes have fallen, war is declared, and mobilization has begun. Lincoln sends out the call.

Then he waits. They do not come. He is torn with anxiety.

The picture shows him standing on the balcony of the White House, with his wife, looking out

across the star-lit night, saying over and over: "Why don't they come? Why don't they come? Why don't they come?"

Then the next scene shows them coming. They come from the farms of New England, and you can see them marching ten abreast, marching like that famous picture, "The Spirit of Seventy-Six."

They come from the cities; they come from the mills; they come from the western plains. Boys come, old men come; and they march singing: "We're Coming, Father Abraham, One Hundred Thousand Strong!"

And Lincoln weeps as he sees them marching into Washington.

So when we respond to that God within us—we summon the angelic hosts to our defense and the powers of eternity come "One Hundred Thousand Strong" and we live the triumphant lives—the conquering lives—because we are God-men; and we sing:

"Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can;
I am God's soul fused in the soul of man!"

One man of whom we hear conquers the fear of death in this heroic manner:

"For me there is less inspiration in Suetonius', 'Hail, Cæsar, we who are about to die salute thee,' than in the simple, choked words of the Brooklyn tailor who told the court that the prisoner, his only son, had confessed to him that he had murdered the man:

“ ‘He is my only son and I love him. Upon my knees I have asked for advice and the Lord leadeth me.’ ”

But let us tell the whole story. The boy was condemned to death. Newspaper reporters called upon the mother. At least one of them wept with her when she said: “No woman is as proud of her husband as I am.”

Then there was that letter carrier in Baltimore who discovered his son in the act of robbing a store. He went to the police and confessed that he had committed the burglary. Later the son was caught. He admitted that he was the burglar.

“The boy’s mother and me ain’t been living together for ten years,” the letter carrier explained. “I don’t blame her much for leaving me. I led her a hell of a life and I thought that she’d had trouble enough without having to cry over Joe, so I just said it was me who done it.”

The Tanners were very humble, decent folk, living near Chicago. There were three or four children, the oldest eight or ten. Tanner was a clerk in a railroad freight office. A young chap. Nothing impressive about either of them—while they lived.

Tanner wasn’t working that day and he and Mary were going to see her mother. The road they had to take crossed a railroad which, two hundred yards north of the grade crossing, turned a sharp bend. The highway carried little traffic. The Tanners were afoot.

Mary Tanner’s foot slipped into the slot between the steel rail and the planking of the crossing. And

there it stuck. The gate tender and John tried to loosen the shoe. It didn't budge; Mary Tanner's foot was in a vise.

The signal that the express train was coming south sounded at the gate tender's kiosk. The two men wrenched at Mary's foot until she fainted in pain. She revived to see the locomotive around the curve. She shut her eyes and cried to John to leave her—to remember the children.

Possibly he didn't hear what she said. The locomotive's whistle was wailing. At any rate John told her that they'd gone this far together and they'd go on together. So he put his arms around her and she held him close. The heavy train didn't come to a halt until every car had passed over the grade crossing.

What were these acts of courage?

Answer: They were God in man. These men and women acted through the God who was in them.

When man has this spirit he is unconquerable, for Death gives him no fear. Something greater than Death steps in—God—and makes that man fearless even of death. Man will face death unafraid because of God in his soul.

Man speaks to death like a conqueror and says:

“Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can—
I am God's soul fused in the soul of man!”

THREE INDOMITABLE SOULS

A few weeks ago one died to whom the whole world is indebted.

When the *Literary Digest* rallied together all of the clippings about his death they headed this symposium: "A Hunchback Who Played With Thunderbolts."

The opening paragraph in this article says that strict eugenics would doubtless have cut off at birth the life of this deformed little German immigrant, to whose bier the great of the earth brought tributes.

When Steinmetz first came to America the officials tried to debar him because he was a poor crippled boy. There are people in the United States who do not know this great wizard and genius, who became the head of the General Electrical Laboratories of Schenectady. He handled millions of dollars and was so great that he even astonished his only rival, Thomas A. Edison, with what he was doing.

He was devoted to science and died leaving an estate of \$500 in insurance, and a ten-year-old automobile.

He was perhaps most famous because he played with lightning. He generated artificial lightning with the energy of 1,000,000 horse power and turned it loose and played with it and handled it and led it back into the stall, forcing it to obey his will as its master.

No wonder the *Digest* said of him: "A Hunchback Who Played With Lightning."

Here was a man deformed, sickly, broken; who was ostracized from his native land for his political views; who was for a time refused admission to

America because of his deformity; who “Played With Lightning.”

Sickness and deformity did not conquer this soul. He must have sung over and over to himself:

“Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can—
I am God’s soul fused in the soul of man!”

“For God has made me a little lower than the angels; he has crowned me with glory and honor!”

Recently I have been reading a new book of literary essays by Alfred Noyes, the British poet. Noyes tells two stories of Henley, the crippled poet who wrote that famous poem, “Invictus.”

Henley was so crippled that he had to have a half dozen operations on his legs, which were shattered with tuberculosis.

But, in spite of his crippled body his soul was indomitable, impregnable and invincible.

One episode Noyes uses to illustrate this:

It was outside a London theater. Oscar Wilde was then in the heyday of his fame; perhaps the most popular person in London. The dramatist himself was waging a heavy warfare with a little crippled critic named Henley. They stood in front of a yellow poster. Evidently Oscar Wilde, as he could easily and readily do, offered an insult to the little cripple named Henley, for as the big man moved away:

“Suddenly Henley—lifting his head like a wounded lion—swung up his crutch and hurled it,

straight at the head of the world's temporary favorite—Oscar Wilde."

There were times when the flesh of Henley's hands would open like the pages of a book. One foot had been amputated in early youth and now the doctors tell him that it is a choice between amputating the other one and death.

But Henley had heard of a young doctor named Lister up in Edinburgh. Henley consulted the doctors about Lister and they dismissed his name with a peculiar contempt, which Henley, the critic, swiftly recognized as the symptom of something unusual.

When all the other doctors criticized Lister, Henley knew there must be something to him, so he went to Edinburgh to be treated. It was there that he met Robert Louis Stevenson, with whom he became lifelong friends, so much so that Stevenson put him in one of his books, "Treasure Island," as John Silver, the buccaneering pirate, because of his indomitable courage.

"Why did you come to me?" asked Lister.

"Because I am told by the rest of your profession that you are utterly incompetent." The great Lister made no reply to this but he saved the foot of this broken, crippled poet.

It is a strange story and a strangely appealing, courageous character whose tale we tell.

Crippled and broken, always on crutches, still he had an undying soul; still there was something about his courage that would make Stevenson use him as a prototype for a hero—a pirate hero at that; still

there was something about this poor broken poet and critic which gave him courage to hurl his crutch at the most popular man in England at that time. Still there was something about him, something of that God-in-Man, which made him write the great poem we all know:

“Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the pit from pole to pole
I thank whatever gods there be
 For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced or cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
 Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
 How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate;
 I am the captain of my soul.”

What was he saying in that verse—this broken cripple?

He was saying what my Symphonic Theme says in two lines:

“Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can—
 I am God’s soul fused in the soul of man.”

Then there was a man named Jesus Christ who walked the wide ways of the world some centuries ago.

He had not where to lay his head; he was a man acquainted with grief, despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows; a lonely man; a man who for a great ideal became unpopular; a man who was driven from pillar to post by men who feared and hated him; a man who was caught like a rabbit in a trap and cornered in a garden at prayer—betrayed by one of his disciples; deserted by another, denied by another; defeated and broken, and murdered and buried—who through it all was still the Unconquerable Christ; who still through it all was the impregnable Christ; who, still through it all, was the poised, aloof, superior soul; spat upon, insulted and killed between two thieves on the despised cross; given gall to drink; and a spear thrust in his side; down whose cheeks, hot and dusty, ran streams of his own blood from the thorns in his fair forehead; blinded with his own tears, sweat and blood; choked by his own sobs and gall; his hands and feet pierced by the nails of ingratitude as much as by the nails of the Roman Empire; this Jesus arose above it all; and in rising, lifted all men with him: "And, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me!"

They could not conquer Jesus with their unjust trials. They could not crush him with their indignities. They could not frighten Jesus with their spikes, nor their thorns, nor their gall. They could not break his spirit with their spit, their sneers and their false accusations. They could not besmirch

his dignity by killing him between two thieves and upon a cross. They could not, with all their Roman power, break his soul. He arose above it all and walked with God where white clouds are born. He cried out on the Cross:

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

Rome bowed in shame, Judas hung himself to a tree in bitter repentance; the very clouds brooded and wept; the earth shook; the world trembled in awe; the Roman soldiers fell on their faces in fear though they were symbols of the greatest material power on earth. For here was a man who was a “little lower than the angels” and who was crowned with glory and honor “even in death”; who was singing in his soul even in his very actions on the cross:

“Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can;
I am God’s soul, fused in the soul of man!”

CHAPTER VIII

Not Alone Any More

MATTHEW 28:20: "And, lo, I am with you alway,
even unto the end of the world."

JOHN 14:18: "I will not leave thee comfortless;
I will come to you."

PSALM 23:4: "For thou art with me; thy rod and
thy staff they comfort me."

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

"O God! My God! My own!
And I do not stand alone!"

—Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

No man walks alone who has God.

There is no trouble so overwhelming, so tragic,
so crushing, that God is not there.

There is no isolation of disease, sickness, death,
that God is not there to share that isolation.

There is no loneliness which any human being
has to endure that God is not there with that human
being.

Allow me a parable! There was a man once who
journeyed into the Canadian wilderness to be alone.
He went so far north that he was hundreds of miles
from civilization. He had gone over trackless
trails into that isolation to be alone. The city had

caved in on him and its pressure had been too much for him. He finally reached a point which made him feel that he was absolutely alone. He remained in that place for many days. His body was rested by the fresh sweetness of the wilderness. Then one night he awoke with a premonition that something was wrong in his home, that one of his children had been injured. There he was hundreds of miles from civilization. He knew that it was just a foolish premonition; that his child was safe and sound with his wife, but nevertheless he felt a sudden, awful sense of aloneness and he wanted to get in touch with civilization.

Then he remembered that his wife had slipped into his camping outfit a wireless equipment, one of those simple arrangements that are common these days which can be set up in a few seconds. He got up, stirred his camp fire into a bright blaze that lighted up the wilderness for rods around, and dug out that equipment. When he had adjusted it he put the receivers to his ears, and waited and listened with an intense eagerness. He felt that if he could for once but hear some human voice, something besides the night calls and the forest sounds, he would not feel so terrifically alone, and that haunting fear about his child would pass away.

Then there came a sound out of the air, a far-off sound, yet faint and sweet as when memories of boyhood days come back again. It was a crowd of negro voices from some sending station singing, "I couldn't hear nobody pray." He listened and then they sang, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." In a lit-

tle while they sang, "The Old-time Religion." And suddenly this isolated city-bred man felt about him, like the dance of fairies in the northern woods, a thousand people and a thousand memories.

He was not alone any more. Memories of boyhood days in the southern home came swarming about him; memories of his mother and father came sweetly in over that radio. He was not alone any more. Memories of boyhood friends in the old southern town came back. The negro voices coming in over the radio, under the magic of this strange modern fairy wand, came back. Then his own city came to him with its busy throngs. His city friends were there with him in the forest that night. He was not alone any more. Then the whole world came to him. But best of all the sweet purpose and religious atmosphere of these old spiritual melodies flooding his soul made God himself seem very near—and God was there in those northern woods—there with him—and he was not alone any more. There God was as real as the trees in the firelight to this isolated searcher for peace. He might have sung to his own soul that night, as the music of a far-away world streamed in to him over the wireless wastes:

"O God! My God! My Own!
And I do not stand alone!"

I want to match with this modern legend the great Comfort Chapter of the New Testament, the fourteenth chapter of St. John.

If a vote were taken in any congregation in America among church people; particularly among older church people; the great Comfort Chapter would be voted the most popular book of the Bible. In these political days of straw-ballots if the church members of all the earth—in any language or creed—from the Orient and the Occident—if such a ballot were taken to determine the most popular book in the Bible, I believe that it would be the “Comfort Book and the Comfort Chapter.”

I believe also that if you were to test the average adult Christian on the one chapter that he could quote the most of it would be this chapter. If you folks were to try yourself out on your ability to quote several continuous verses of any chapter you could start off with:

“Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God believe also in me—”

That would be the chapter that you could quote the most from.

The reason that this is true is that this is the great book and the great chapter that assures humanity that it is not alone; that when Jesus goes he will leave a Comforter to take his place. It is that great chapter which confirms the lonely world in its hope that it will never be alone. It is the one chapter of all the Bible that assures me and that assures you who listen that the words of my theme are eternally true this morning:

“O God! My God! My Own!
And I do not stand alone!”

The whole tone of this beautiful chapter is resonant with the everlasting presence of Jesus; the Jesus that loved us so much that he would not leave us alone; the Jesus who loved us so much and who understood us so much—understood our needs and our hungerings—that he knew we would be terrified like little children in the dark to be left alone. So he left us assurances that we would not be alone.

Some of the phrases of this assurance are beautiful to hear, like the sound of sweet music on the autumn air:

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **COMFORTER**; that he may abide with you **FOREVER!**”

“Forever! Forever! Forever!” What a ring to that word! That sounds like the wind through the fall trees these beautiful days: “Forever!” That sounds like a tumbling of lonely Niagara Falls: “Forever!”

That sounds like the echo of Tennyson’s brook:

“Men may come and men may go
But I go on forever!”

That sounds like some of the phrases of the Bible about God who is spoken of as an “Everlasting God.” “Forever! Forever! Forever!” “That he may abide with you **FOREVER!**”

It reminds me of a haunting phrase that Bishop Quayle used to use in his lecture on Julius Cæsar; the echo of the mob that howled his triumph: “Julius Cæsar forever! Julius Cæsar forever! Julius Cæsar forever!”

And this comfort chapter says: "And I will send you another Comforter; that he may abide with you FOREVER!"

And that word "Abide" is no small thing in that sentence. That has an everlasting quality about it also. That has a feel of Eternity about it. That has the ring of loyalty about it: "That he may abide forever."

That means that this comforter will come into my church and "abide." It means that this comforter will come into my house, if I wish him, and that he will "abide"; and it means that he may come into my heart and "abide" forever.

A second phrase that gives me a feeling that I am not alone in this old world is:

"For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

That means that this comforter is a citizen of my town or village or city. This means that he works in my shop or office or store; that means that this comforter is a member of my noonday lunch club or my lodge. He is a part of my household if I wish him to be, for it says that he dwelleth with me and "shall be in you."

Third, this great Comfort Chapter says:

"He that loveth me—I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

We are even going to see him with our spiritual eyes. He will make us know that he is there. It will not be a mere prophecy or bit of imagery—but he will be manifest to us and we shall know that we are not alone.

Fourth, this Comfort Chapter says:

"If a man love me he will keep my words; and my father will love him and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

That Comforter is going to move into our house and our hearts forever. Jesus employs the tremendous power of repetition to make this tender truth forever clear to us. Watch the process:

"That he may abide with you forever."

"For he dwelleth with you."

"And we will come unto him and make our ABODE with him."

Jesus was like a father who was going away from his children, wanting to assure his children that he would still be with them; that although men broke his body on a tree, he would still be there; that they need not worry, nor weep, nor feel alone; that he would be beside them, dwelling with them in their homes and hearts; that he would actually appear unto them, as he did later; that he would dwell with them; that he would make his abode with them.

We thank thee, Jesus, for that great Comfort Chapter. It thrills our souls forever these lonely days, for we need to know, much and always, that thou art with us and beside us, loving us and keeping us. And that Comfort Chapter gives us a right to sing in our souls, like the singing of the winds before the dawn:

"O God! My God! My Own!
And we do not stand alone!"

"For thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me," and, dear God of love, Thou hast said elsewhere:

"And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

THE FOURFOLD ASSURANCE OF THE BIBLE THAT WE SHALL NOT STAND ALONE ANY MORE

Up to the time of the Prophecy of Jesus the world was pretty lonely.

True enough it had Prophets and Sages who lived and died and wrought great comfort to great hosts of humanity. But no Prophet came who was present before Jesus came, and who lived such a brief span with the world as its friend and fellow, and then, dying, still left himself behind to comfort humanity in its loneliness.

I remember a prayer of a "down-and-out" that thrilled my soul once on a time and since then I pray that prayer many times because it has become my prayer.

That simple fellow got down on his knees in front of a great crowd of preachers in an Annual Methodist Conference where I was giving the addresses at the four o'clock hour. He was unlearned and untutored. He was uncouth. He had never learned to speak English correctly. He stumbled and blundered when he talked to man but he became sublimely eloquent when he talked with God in prayer. That was the reason why these preach-

ers loved to have him pray, this product of a mission.

That day he prayed a prayer that I shall never forget. That day he prayed a prayer that gripped my soul and squeezed the tears out of my eyes. I have read a good many books of prayer but never a prayer like that. He said:

“O God, my God, I’m the lonesomest man in the world. Amen.”

That was the prayer of the world before Jesus came: “O God, I’m the lonesomest world in the universe.”

Millions of lonely human beings groping in the darkness prayed that prayer.

God heard that prayer and he sent a dream to them first of all.

He sent a dream because that was all they were ready for as yet. God knew that humanity was not capable of receiving the reality of that dream all at once. It would not understand. The time was not ripe. Full noon had not come for that dream to flower into reality.

That dream was what theologians call “The Messianic Prophecy.” It was the world’s greatest dream.

That dream kept the soul of the world alive for five centuries.

That dream was God’s presence on the earth before Jesus came to humanity.

Men felt God everywhere about them even before Jesus came.

The Old Testament teems with this thought: that

there is a God present when the world needs him and that he is to send his son to earth; that he does not leave the world alone.

You can feel God hovering over the world in the Old Testament like a mother hovers over her sleeping child and in just the same spirit. She looks down upon that sleeping child just as God looked down upon his spiritually sleeping child, the world, with a great love and a tremendous yearning in his soul—a great longing for us.

God, before Jesus, might be called a “Longing” for the world of humanity. His heart was unutterably wistful for us. We were his children and he wanted us to know that he was about. He had a longing for us to know his love for us.

Everything he does is an expression of that longing.

The story of creation is such a longing put into allegory.

He wanted his children to know that he was present, that he loved them, and that they were not alone, so he sent this allegory of creation, so simply put that his children would love it and understand it.

He not only sent his allegories but he sent to earth his chosen leaders to lead his children out of bondage and captivity in order that they might not think they were alone. In distress, and despair; in slavery and bondage; in death and disease and desolation the Children of Israel thought they were forsaken. Then came God, through Moses, to tell them that they were not alone in their distress.

Then he sent his poets to let them know that they were not alone. He sent his poets to express for them their religious longings and loneliness. David was the supreme poet of them all. God sent him from the hillside where he was tending sheep, not particularly to be a fighter, nor to be a Prince, nor to be a King, but to be a Poet in order that he might tell the people that they were not alone; in order that he might express for those people their religious longings and loneliness. And in that supreme twenty-third Psalm he does it sublimely when he says:

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

That Psalm is God’s assurance that we are not alone; not alone in loneliness, in heartache, in separation, in death. That is God’s promise through his singing poet that he is forever with us, even when we go down into the vale of the shadow of Death.

Not only through allegory, prophet, great leaders and poets did God make the Old Testament world know that he was with his own, but through what might be called Voice and Vision he made his presence known.

All through the Old Testament days men were hearing voices.

These episodes are many but the outstanding one was when Elijah after the fire heard a "still voice." In the Garden of Eden at eventide Adam and Eve heard the Voice of God walking in the wilderness.

These voices are God making known that he is there; that man is not alone.

The Visions are as many as his Voices. Visions come all through the Old Testament and men see these visions and their entire lives and destinies are changed in a flash. These are real. They are more real than granite cliffs. These Visions, such as the vision of Moses on Mt. Sinai, have changed the face of the earth, and the destinies of the race. They are God's presence, are these voices and these visions.

And so all of these things, these leaders like Moses, these allegories of creation, these poets like David, these Voices and Visions are God telling the world that it is not alone; that he is there. These are God's longings for humanity.

"Like tides on a crescent sea beach
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come surging and welling in,

In from the mystic ocean
Whose rim no foot has trod;
Some of us call it Longing
While others call it God."

Long before the Messianic Prophecy God was wistfully longing for us, longing that we should know that we are not alone; that he was there all the time; and through great leaders, through prophets, through poets, through Voices and Visions he let his children know that they were not alone in their distress.

"O God! My God! My Own!
And I do not stand alone."

The second assurance from God that we poor human beings do not stand alone is the assurance of the Messianic Prophecy.

When the race was old enough to understand this God put it into the hearts of the Hebrew people that some day there would be a Christ, a Messiah, a Savior, a Counselor, a Prince of Peace, an Everlasting Friend.

That was one of God's ways of telling humanity that he was there.

God's revelation is a process of evolution.

God does not reveal everything at once. He does it gradually. He gives us as much revelation as we, the human race are capable of understanding.

During the period before the Messianic Prophecy God let us know that he was on hand by sending

us his leaders, by sending his prophets and poets, and by sending us his Voices and Visions. Then when we got mature enough in our spiritual capacity he sent us the Messianic Prophecy. I do not mean to say that there was a sharp line dividing this process. There never is.

The valley gradually molds itself into the uplands, and the uplands into the hills, and the hills into the mountain peaks and the peaks into the sky.

The grass of the vale melts into the trees, and the trees into the forests, and the forests climb the hills and get larger and then smaller and as they climb the mountains the trees get smaller and scrubby and then the snow-line and no more trees—and before we know it—with no abrupt break—the colors of the valley have melted into the colors and the foliage of the skies.

So the time prior to the Messianic Prophecy melted gradually into the period of the Prophecy of the Coming Christ.

That prophecy for five centuries thrilled the hearts of mankind. The world never had an expectation toward which it looked with so much hope. That was God's way of telling man that he was there all the time, that man, his child, was not alone any more.

The third period of this assurance was when Christ actually came. That was God's way of telling us when Christ was here that we were not alone. Christ was God—here.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that, whosoever believeth on

him should not perish but should have everlasting life."

That was God "longing" again that the world might know that he was there; that the world was not alone; that his children were near and dear to him.

I imagine that it must be with some such longing as God had that our friends in the spiritual world look down upon us and hunger in their hearts for us to know that they are there, knowing all the while that we can never know until the dust of sin has been wiped from our blind eyes and we become so pure that we can get in touch with the spiritual world and know that those we love are not far from us at any time.

So God longed that we might know and in his longing he broke asunder the veil between now and then, here and there, and Jesus came through to make us know that God is with us and that we are not alone; and when we hear this glad good news we shout and sing:

"O God! My God! My Own!
And I do not stand alone!"

"For thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

And Thou hast said: "And lo I am with thee."

Fourth, came the period of the Comforter. That was God and Christ assuring us that God was still with us; that even with Jesus crushed and broken on the tree and trapped in the tomb God was still with us as ever before.

There has never been a second since God launched the human race on the sea of time that he has forsaken us; that he has not always been there with us, "keeping watch above his own."

First, the time before the Messianic period of Prophecy, when, through leaders, poets and prophets, through Visions and Voices, he let us know that we were not alone; second, through the Messianic Prophecy itself he let us know that he was still there; third, through the actual physical presence of Jesus on earth; and fourth, through the Comforter that Jesus left behind God makes us know that he is with us always and that we are not alone any time.

GOD LEAVES US NOT ALONE IN OUR SORROWS AND SINS

It is a thrilling thing that we are not alone even in Sin.

God is with us then and never a man turns over in the slime of his sin that he is not God-haunted.

Bishop Quayle has a beautiful essay on the "Haunting Quality" and he speaks of naught but the beautiful in life. But I will add a touch of blackness to that picture. I will thrust a darkening storm into that sunny summer afternoon essay by saying that sin has a haunting quality and that haunting is God.

God is always there when we sin.

I heard a boy say once that he never sinned a sin

that his mother's face did not arise before his eyes to break his heart.

I often wonder how men can sin that the faces of their mothers, their wives, and their little children do not rise to haunt them in the midst of their sin.

No man sins that God is not there; and broken-hearted.

No man sins that his loved ones, dead and gone, are not there and broken-hearted.

No man sins that wife, and child and sister, and lover are not there; and broken-hearted.

No man sins that Jesus Christ is not there; and broken-hearted.

No man sins that God is not there; and broken-hearted.

God does not even leave us alone in our sins.

He is always there. I like that beautiful painting, which shows Jesus standing at a lowly door, with a lantern in his hand, knocking, and waiting. He is always there—no matter what is going on inside of that door—and that is the reason that no man can sin without God knowing of that sin; and that is the reason why man is haunted by his sins:

“O God! My God! My Own!
And I do not stand alone!”

Shakespeare knew that God was always there; that God which we sometimes call Conscience, or Guilt. He knew that “the damned spot would not out”; that blood of sin could not be washed from a

man or a woman's hands even though that man or that woman were a King or a Queen. Shakespeare knew that Banquo's ghost would never down; but what Shakespeare did not know was that those bloody hands and Banquo's ghost were God. God was there.

I know a lonely boy to-day. He is a real boy and not a fictitious boy. He has had the world tumble about him. The world has caved in on him. He feels crushed. He feels alone. Such times come to every man and woman. Factories close, traitors work from within, enemies from without, business goes to smash, friends prove untrue, and the world caves in on a fellow. He goes away from that world after he has scrambled out of the débris of the caved-in world, and he walks the desert alone, alone, and lonely and feels as if there is nothing left; that he is alone—that is, until he remembers that God has never deserted the human race from the beginning and that that God, through Christ, has promised to be with him unto the end; and then he feels a thrill of new hope in his soul like the thrill of electricity running through his body and he sings:

“O God! My God! My Own!
And I do not stand alone!”

“For thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff,
they comfort me.”

I know a lonely woman. Her home is broken up. Her kiddies are with her and she has had to leave her home and fight the battle out alone for her kid-

dies. I know the lonely hours which that woman has, even though she is right in the matter. She has been accustomed to leaning on that man and then suddenly she leaves him because the situation has become unbearable—and goes out alone.

It takes courage to do that—courage such as martyrs had when they faced the flames.

That woman and all like her feel unutterably alone this morning.

But you are not alone. God is still there with you and yours.

He understands; he loves, he keeps.

I come to bring to you the glad, good news that you are not alone in your tragedy and loneliness; God is there with you.

And you will know it now, after hearing this sermon, and you will go out of this church sanctuary as one who goes from dark to light; from night to day; and a new dawn will come to you, as you sing softly to yourself:

“O God! My God! My Own!
And I do not stand alone!”

“For thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.”

I know a mother whose husband drinks. She is unhappy. Her children are in constant terror. Their daddy is a quiet, peace-loving man when he is sober, but he is a savage when drunk.

He terrorizes that home every week-end. That lonely broken-hearted mother has come to me a

dozen times and said: "I don't know how I can stand it. I am so alone in my struggle."

No, mother, you are not alone. God has seen to that. He is still there. And he will continue to be there. And some of these days you will realize that, something will steal over you like the calm after a storm, as you sing softly to yourself:

"O God! My God! My Own!
And I do not stand alone!"

"For thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff
they comfort me."

I know a lonely father whose wife is in New Mexico fighting the great battle with disease. That man and his two beautiful girls and his manly son come to church every Wednesday evening and Sunday. This is their refuge. We are their friends. We want to be.

The other day that mother sent for a copy of Bishop Quayle's little book of Prayers, "The Climb to God," and "The Throne of Grace" because she had heard the Pastor read from these comforting books through these three years of her membership in this church.

And as this father and these dear children come and go among us, we know how lonely they are, and it breaks our hearts. We give them our full share of love. They shall feel that love every minute. They must know that we are lonely with them.

They must know that our prayers are theirs every hour.

They must know that we understand the lonely nights and days and Sabbaths with mother and wife so far away—especially we who have known what separation from our loved ones means—separation of war and sickness. We know and we understand and tears are upon our cheeks also, and a lump in our throats and a mist in our eyes and a warmer handclasp for them is ours.

But all of us must know this day that God is in that home and that God is with that dear mother and wife; and that God is in this church in friendship for that group; and that they have a thousand friends who are praying for them and loving them harder than ever; and that God is with them hourly. And when they get this truth shot into their souls something must happen to them like an old-fashioned conversion, and the Spring must come to their Winter; and with the Springtime the mother will be back, and the Springtime of a great peace and joy must come to their souls, and they will find themselves shouting on the hilltops like children let loose to play:

“O God, My God! My Own!
And I do not stand alone!”

“For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff
they comfort me.”

There is a book called “Children of Loneliness” by Anzia Yezierska. In it is a chapter called, “A Bed for the Night.”

It is the story of one of these Children of Loneliness, the immigrants who come to America.

The girl had been sick with the flu and had just been discharged from the hospital, weak and trembling, only upon returning to her boarding house to learn that her landlady had let her room to another—at twice the rent—and “No housekeeping privileges.”

The landlady must look after herself, and she had four mouths to feed, and when the poor outcast protested against the injustice of it and the law the landlady said:

“There are no laws for roomers!”

It was a bitter thing to face; no room and no money; homeless and sick.

“I tried to speak. But no voice came to my lips. I felt struck with a club on the head. I could only stare at her, and I must have been staring for some time without seeing her for I had not noticed she had gone till I heard a voice from the upper stairs, ‘Are you still there?’

“‘Oh—yes—yes—I—I—am—going—going.’ I tried to rouse my stunned senses which seemed struck to the earth.

“I walked and walked. All thoughts of reporting at my office left my mind. I was driven by despair. Tears pressed in my throat, but my eyes were dry as sand.”

A light came through the dark. She would go to a Settlement that she had known in her prosper-

ous days. She went. The woman in charge patted her on the back and told her that she would give her the address of some mothers of their home.

“One swift glance at the calm, well-fed face and I felt instantly that Miss Ward, trying to be kind, had never known the terror of homelessness.

“Then I went to Mrs. Olney who had, in her early days, helped me get a stenographer’s course. ‘Get me a place where I can live!’ I cried.”

Miss Olney wanted to send her to the Better Housing Bureau.

“I felt as if a powerful lamp went out suddenly within my soul. A sharp chill seized me.

“A blur came over me. I was sick. Everything seemed to twist and turn around me. Red and black spots blinded me. I heard a voice screaming like a lunatic: ‘I have no home—no home—not even a bed for the night.’”

Driven to a park bench she found a friend—a harlot—who took her to her rooms.

She wanted to remain indefinitely but the harlot couldn’t let her and cried out:

“You don’t know what you’re asking. I—ain’t—no—good! Don’t touch me! Can’t you see the smut all over me? Ain’t it in my face? She pushed me out.”

“As the door slammed, I heard sobbing—loosened torrents of woe. I sank to my knees. A light, not of this earth, passed through the door that had shut me out. A holiness enveloped me.

“This woman had changed the world for me. I could love the people I had hated yesterday. There was that something new in me, a light that the dingiest rooming house could not dim, nor all the tyranny of the landlady shut out.

“Vague, half-remembered words flashed before me in letters of fire. ‘Despised and rejected of men’ —a woman of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

And what was that woman saying?

She was singing, that, through a human being, through an outcast of the streets, she had learned that God does not leave one alone; that:

“O God! My God! My Own!
And I do not stand alone!”

CHAPTER IX

How God Comes to Mankind

ACTS 2:2: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

"Then suddenly, all unaware,
I heard God's voice upon the air."

—*Bliss Carman.*

Most of the religious experiences of life come like the flash of a meteor across midnight skies.

I remember once as a boy seeing a flaming meteor in mid-day and that memory stands out forever in my soul.

I remember, also, as a boy kneeling at an old altar in an old Methodist church, when a sudden flame of electrical power swept through my body and through my soul, lighting it, purifying it; and that memory shall never die.

"Then suddenly, all unaware,
I heard God's voice upon the air."

This sermon will be a little different from the usual sermon. It is to be a parable sermon, or a story sermon.

It is a story from that unusual book, "Hungry Hearts," of which I have spoken often before.

It is the strange and yet the usual story of a little Russian girl who came to America, the haven of all downtrodden people.

As far back as she could remember in Russia she had heard marvelous tales of this Haven of Hope that we call America. It had always been her dream to come to America because that would give her a chance for an education, a thing that she could not get anywhere else, especially in her own country.

Many were the memories of sitting around a family open fire in Russia and hearing her father tell of this land of plenty, fair play and opportunity, where all men were equal, and there was no Tzar, and all people were kind and Christian.

Then came the great day when this little girl and her Russian parents sailed for America. It was a memorable event in their lives. They had to starve themselves for years in order to save the passage money but finally the money was safely gathered together and they started.

Then came that wonderful day when they all lined up on the decks of the ship and saw for the first time the Statue of Liberty.

This little Russian girl says that they shouted and sang, but that most of them cried with the hope that was in their hearts.

Then came disillusionment.

This little Russian girl wanted an education more than she wanted anything else. She had an urge on her soul to get an education.

She found that she could get this education only by working in a laundry from four o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock and then going to the Normal School in New York City.

After the school day was over she also found that she must go back to the laundry from four o'clock in the afternoon until eight and ten and often until midnight in order to make enough money to get through school.

This terrible and grueling schedule she kept up four years and finally passed an examination and went to Miss Whiteside, the head of the school for her diploma and certificate to teach.

Miss Whiteside looked her up and down with a critical, appraising glance, and then said: "I am sorry but I cannot give you a certificate to teach."

"Why not?" asked the little Russian girl.

"Because you are not neat. Your cuffs are soiled. Your hair is mussed. Your nails are not polished and clean. You are not up to the standards that we wish for our teachers."

Then, as this little Russian girl tells it herself: "All of the pent-up indignation of the unwashed of the world, swept like a bursting volcano of righteous indignation from my soul and my lips. I spat fire at that woman. I was an earthquake unleashed. I was a revolution run rampant. I was a tiger woman defending her young. The injustice and intolerance of this refusal loosed all the fire of the ages in my soul.

"I told that complacent, well-dressed little Miss Whiteside that while she and her kind were sleep-

ing for four years I had been toiling away in a laundry from four o'clock until eight o'clock in order that I might have the privileges of school. I told her that I did not have a bathtub in my home; indeed that I had never seen one. I told her that the best I could do was to get food to eat. I told her that it was because of my labor that she and her kind were able to keep clean and neat. I told her that while she was making herself neat and clean I was ironing her laundry. Before I was through with my indictment of her and her kind, she had granted me my diploma and my certificate to teach."

Then followed two years of rebuff and heartache. She was a Russian girl. She did not know how to dress in the American way. She did not, as yet, know the American niceties.

She lived in a home that had never seen a bathtub. It was not possible for her to keep herself as American-looking as she wanted to. Therefore, every place that she went she was buffeted about by the cruel hand of Fate.

She was unable to get a real position. Now and then they gave her a chance to fill in. But they always refused her a regular place.

After two years of discouragement and rebuff this lonely, heart-hungry, tragically broken and discouraged girl decided on death as the only way out of her difficulties. She had come to the limit of her own courage and her own strength.

Suicide was the only thing left.

She was on the way to the river when she happened to pass Miss Van Ness.

Miss Van Ness was a teacher in the Normal School. Miss Van Ness was the only teacher in that school who had ever treated her like a human being. Miss Van Ness was the only teacher in that school who had acted as if she was interested in her soul. The one bright spot of all those hard years was Miss Van Ness, but during these two years of rebuff and discouragement this girl had never seen Miss Van Ness, and she didn't want to see her this morning. She tried to avoid her to-day but Miss Van Ness saw her and crossed the street to her side.

This kindly woman saw, at once, that her little Russian friend had seen hard days and hard ways during the two years. She saw the look of utter loneliness; the mark of disappointment on her face; the footprints of defeat.

So, without much preliminary she gathered the little Russian girl into her arms and comforted her. Then they went to a room and the little Russian immigrant poured out her sad and tragic story for an hour.

Then Miss Van Ness talked. She talked of love and her own intention to stand by this girl until she got her chance. She talked of friendship and Christ and Christian women.

Time flew and the little Russian girl forgot all thoughts of suicide. She forgot her heartaches and loneliness. She forgot her bitter hatred of America.

Let her finish the story herself as she does in "Hungry Hearts:"

"I stood again on my own feet. I looked up into the face of Miss Van Ness. I felt as if strong arms

had gotten under me and had lifted me up and up and up until I walked with God and Angels where white wings were fluttering. It seemed as if I were living on some high eminence and all the people below me looked like tiny specks. I felt as if I had been lifted up so high that all difficulties of other days had disappeared.

"I suddenly knew that I loved the things and the people that I had despised and hated the day before. I suddenly knew that the skies that had been black an hour before were now illuminated with a holy light. I suddenly knew that a city that had seemed heartless an hour before was now my best friend. I suddenly knew that a country that had been a traitor to my lonely heart was now my **Haven of Hope**.

"I stepped back from Miss Van Ness. I sobbed aloud, but through my tragic tears I laughed. Then I grabbed the arms of Miss Van Ness in my shaking clutch and said: 'Oh, Miss Van Ness, I have found America! You have helped me to find America! I have not only found America but I have found God!'"

Through a Christian woman that Russian girl had found America and she had found God.

You will be interested in knowing that that girl to-day is **Anzia Yezierska**, an unusual writer of short stories—perhaps one of the few women writers whose stories are welcomed by the most astute editors in America, who has won fame and friends during the last ten years. She is the author of one novel, "**Salome of the Tenements**," and two striking

books of short stories, "Children of Loneliness" and "Hungry Hearts." She cannot supply the demand for her stories because those stories are truth, because those stories are real. They bite and sting; they squeeze the tears out of our hearts. They come from life. They come from the homes and haunts of Children of Loneliness. They are the experiences of "Hungry Hearts."

What this young girl was experiencing that desperate morning when she cried out to Miss Van Ness, "I have found America! I have found God!" was the same thing that suddenly came upon the disciples of that Upper Room:

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

And on this memorable day there came into this broken discouraged Russian immigrant's life a sound as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the room where these two women were sitting and it filled all of her heart. It was an experience of God. She might have described that experience in the words of our Symphonic Sermon theme this morning:

"Then suddenly, all unaware,
I heard God's voice upon the air."

She heard God's voice through the voice of a kindly Christian woman.

In that parable story is the heart of the hope of humankind in America.

HOW GOD COMES TO HUMANKIND IN
EVERYDAY LIFE

God comes to human beings in everyday life through individuals and through organizations. He works in these two ways and as much through one as the other.

First, he comes through individuals.

There are two kinds of individuals in the world. One is the Miss Whiteside type and the other is the Miss Van Ness type. The thousands of foreign immigrants who come to America come in contact with either one or the other of these two types of individuals and it depends entirely upon which kind they meet as to whether they find America or as to whether they find God.

If they run into Miss Whitesides all their lives and do not find the type of Christian woman represented by Miss Van Ness they never find America and they never find God.

Advertisers will tell you what we all learn, and that is, that the best kind of publicity is the "Mouth to Mouth Publicity." When people get a passion for a thing to such an extent that they will talk it among themselves and go out as missionaries for that thing which absorbs their souls, that thing is a sure success. That is the way that the church of Jesus Christ was advanced through all the centuries and through all the nations of the earth.

Booksellers will tell you that the best kind of publicity for a book is the "Mouth to Mouth Publicity." That, when people are possessed with a

book so much that they talk about it among their friends; talk about it at their work and their play and in their social groups—then that book is a made book. That is exactly the kind of publicity that made the ancient classics. Dickens, Hugo and Shakespeare and the older classics were made, not by a newspaper or motion picture publicity, but because individuals got to talking about them.

Religion must be promulgated in that manner if it is promulgated successfully. This is the great hope of the church—that the people of the church will have such a passion for the church that they will go out and talk the church to everybody; that they will be so possessed with the passion for God that they will be concerned about their mothers and their children and their families until those children and those loved ones and those friends are in the church and have given their hearts to Christ.

The old days and ways of religion when a man was concerned about his neighbor's spiritual welfare were the days of passion and if the church loses that passion of the individual the church has lost its greatest power.

Kipling in his poem "Tomlinson" has two lines that have always remained in my mind:

"The sins that ye do by two and two
Ye shall pay for one by one."

And so it is with God and spiritual things.

Each of us must find God for his own soul, and each of us must carry God to other souls. God de-

pends upon us to do this thing. That is the supreme mission of any Christian soul. That soul, like Miss Van Ness, must know that God comes to individuals through other individuals, and that the individual who finds the blessing of God must pass that blessing on to others.

That is the passion and that is the spirit of the Woman's Home Missionary Society whose annual meeting we celebrate this morning. The whole spirit of this society is summed up in this story. Miss Whiteside represents the woman of the world, the woman who has no soul, no heart, no Christ. Miss Van Ness represents the woman who has found the wonders of America and the wonders of God and wants to pass them on to others through the love that is in her heart.

Second: God works through organizations as well as through individuals.

The Wesley Revivals found England in the throes of corruption and they lifted England into a new state of spiritual glow and glory. Out of these revivals grew the Methodist Church.

The Reformation is another illustration of the way God works, through organizations as well as through individuals.

Out of the Reformation grew the great Protestant Church and through the Protestant Church has come a great world-wide vehicle for carrying the great truths of God to humanity.

The church in turn has organizations within itself that carry on definite tasks. One of these organizations is the great Missionary Movement that car-

ries the story of Jesus to the ends of the earth. The church itself could not live if it did not carry this truth beyond its own selfish confines and limits. This is the very thing that keeps it alive in the earth.

This work could only be carried on by organizations. The individual is a part of the organization but the individual must be backed up by an organization.

Thus is carried out the whole program of carrying Christ to the ends of the earth through organizations.

The women of the church of Methodism are also organized into two great missionary groups. One is the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and the other is the Woman's Home Missionary Society. One organization, as its name indicates, concerns itself especially with advancing the story of Christ into foreign lands and the other concerns itself with being the Miss Van Ness for the needy at home.

GOD COMES THROUGH LONG SLOW PROCESSES
AND HE COMES THROUGH SUDDEN
REVELATIONS

Just as it is true that God comes to human beings through individuals and through organizations, so is it true that God comes to individuals through long slow accumulative processes and also through sudden revelations and experiences.

First: He comes to some, slowly, and through a process of accumulation and growth.

The very world itself has come to God through

the process of spiritual evolution and upward growth through countless ages.

Different natures find God in different ways. I have a brother who is of a scientific turn of mind. He comes to his decisions slowly and surely over a long process of time. When he was still a college student he had made a thousand experiments on the bacteria of milk and the results of his experiments had been published in the Chicago Medical Journal, and recorded in a Berlin Medical Journal. He was working on a method of making it possible for women in their homes to test the bacteriological content of milk.

When God came to him, he came slowly and surely, and without much excitement or turmoil or upheaval. God came to my brother slowly and surely, but certainly. There was no upheaval of the soul. There was no sudden flash, no blinding experience like Paul had on the road to Damascus, but God came. That is the important thing.

God came to me in one great adventuring moment and that moment stands out forever like a flash of blinding light. It was as if some electrical power had poured through me, lighting my life and cleansing me from the bottom of my feet to the top of my head. That electrical power shot through me in waves and from that day to this I have never been the same human being. I had found God.

God came to Lincoln through a slow process.

Lincoln's nature was not the kind of a nature that could be suddenly upheaved. He was slow, methodical, and God came to him in the wise way that

God always comes to those who have natures of this particular type. God is a wise God as well as a loving and longing Father.

The Woman's Home Missionary Society has wisely understood that one of the ways in which God comes to humankind is in the slow process of evolution and to that end this organization takes the children when they are young and organizes them into groups and bands to study about God and his work among human beings.

Second: God comes to some suddenly in a flash of a second.

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind."

"Then suddenly, all unaware,
I heard God's voice upon the air."

The Bible itself has manifold and various illustrations of the different ways that God comes to human beings.

God came to John the Baptist through solitude and quiet. John went out into the wilderness alone to meditate. He lived in camel's hair, and ate wild honey. He fasted and prayed. It took solitude to find God for John the Baptist.

Then suddenly he came like a flaming whirlwind with his message of repentance to the world. "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!"

"Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!"

That message thundered from hill to hill, from vale to vale, from village to village until it per-

meated even into the corridors of the Court. Men high and low cringed before that message and that challenge. John was the flaming sword. And yet God came to him in the solitude of the forests while he was in retirement.

Thomas had to have proof of God and Christ. He was always called "Doubting Thomas." Even when Jesus came back Thomas had to lay his hands in the wounds of Christ before he would believe. Thomas was of the temperament that had to have proof of everything.

Peter had to come to his fullest belief in God and Christ through tragedy. It was through the tragedy of his own unworthiness, his own cowardice, his own weakness that Peter finally came to the full fruition of his belief in God and Christ.

When poor, weak, vacillating Peter; whom Jesus had once called a Rock; denied Jesus and the cock crew—that was a great moment of humiliation and sorrow and tragedy to Peter. He had never realized how weak he was until that tragic moment, and then he hated himself, repented in humility, and found God through Christ.

It often takes just such an experience for some of us to find ourselves and to find our Christ and to find out God.

It took death for Judas to find himself and to find Christ and God.

Those thirty pieces of silver; the horror of his betrayal of Jesus; the sight of Jesus on the Cross dying and living in Death, won Judas, and his penitence was so deep that he died by his own hand.

It took a streak of lightning for Paul to find Jesus and himself and God. That story is immortal and eternal, and fascinating to all souls. That story lives in the annals of all spiritual adventures as the supreme, the superb story of all time.

It took Vision for John on Patmos to find God and Christ and himself.

It took strange insight, it took mountains, and valleys, and candlesticks, and thrones, and celestial cities, and voices sounding through deep valleys of time for John to find God and Jesus, but he found him in his own way and day. That was the way for John to find God and so God came to John in that way.

There is the old Tennyson "In Memoriam" quotation that we learned in High School which sums up the thing that we all know when we get through with this experience of finding God:

"I found him not in world or sun
Or eagle's wing or insect's eye,
Nor thro' the questions men may try
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If, e'er, when faith had fall'n asleep
I heard a voice, 'Believe no more !'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And, like a man in wrath, the heart
Stood up and answered, 'I have felt ! ' "

God does come and he comes suddenly. God does come, and he comes to us in the way that we understand.

I love children, and I learned long since that you can approach some children suddenly, in a play mood and you can leap upon them and they will understand it and love it and respond to it like playing kittens. There is an art in approaching a child if you want that child's love.

But most children you have to approach quietly and calmly, and slowly, and kindly. To bluster up to a child's heart is nearly always fatal.

You dare not bombard a child's heart. You will frighten that child and it will take a long time for that child to get over that first bad approach. I have had to work for weeks and months to offset a bad approach I myself have made to a child's heart. But not any longer. I have learned.

God does not terrify a heart. He knows how to approach that heart. He has been at this business of coming to mankind so long that he has learned the divine art of approach.

All we know is that suddenly God is there in the room, in our homes, in our church, in our hearts and we hear the echoing words of the Scriptures:

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind.”

And then we know that we know and the words of our Symphonic Theme come suddenly true; whether God comes silently or like a hearty friend:

“Then suddenly, all unaware,
I heard God's voice upon the air.”

My friend, Dr. William Mitchell, went over from Worcester to preach in Matthewson Street Church one Sunday afternoon. He did not know that his sermon was to be sent over the radio, and therefore he did not tell his family. However, it is the custom of the Mitchell family every Sunday afternoon to listen in on the Sunday afternoon sermons that are broadcast. One of the Mitchell boys was fingering idly at the radio adjustments, when suddenly he heard a strangely familiar voice coming in out of the air. He listened intently, and then jumped to his feet, crying out to the others, with boyish ecstasy: "It's Father! It's Father! It's Father's voice! He's talking on the radio!"

So, suddenly, with bewildering joy, came this experience to the friends in the upper room; that strange presence of their Holy Father; that rushing of mighty wind, those tongues of flame; and the church of Christ was born.

So, suddenly comes Jesus Christ to our souls, like a rushing of mighty wind, and tongues of flame, and a great joy in our human hearts. And, when he comes we find ourselves singing like a mother with her child at her breast; like a lover on the way with a rendezvous with his sweetheart; like a happy man going back to his college commencement; like a girl bride coming home with her first-born baby; like a man coming from work at night; so the human soul sings, when God comes into that soul:

"Then suddenly, all unaware,
I heard God's voice upon the air."

CHAPTER X

Life's Worth and Woe

JOHN 16:33: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

MOFFATT TRANSLATION: "But courage! I have conquered the world."

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

"Touch thou my soul that I may know
Life's worth more real than its woe!"

—*Studdert Kennedy.*

A while ago there was a total eclipse of the sun. It was visible in the northern part of the United States.

From the popular viewpoint it was like some great drama enacted on the stage of the universe. We watched it, during the few minutes that it strode across the stage—that moon—across the stage of the sun, and we were thrilled with the spectacle.

The world has many great spectacles. Most of them occur in the sky.

Recently we have been told by astronomers that we have a strange body whirling around us, close to our earth, within our orbit, about the size of the pyramids of Egypt. It was a passing comet that was

drawn into our magnetic influence and has never been able to escape the tug of the earth.

But without doubt the most fascinating spectacle that the theater of the Heavens offers us is the total eclipse.

Everybody can understand why it is now, but in olden days the total eclipse caused untold horror to the people. They thought the end of the world had come.

It is an awesome thing when you do not know its meaning.

I read recently in the Geographic Magazine that if the total eclipse of the sun should last for only one month there would not be any human beings left on the earth. That is a startling thought. It is all right for a few minutes or seconds but not for a long stretch of time.

I have heard people complaining about the brevity of the sun's total eclipse. They ought to be glad that it doesn't last any longer than it does.

In some beautiful way God has made provision for us thus thoughtfully.

The universe is well arranged for the best interests of humanity.

Ofttimes we human beings get in the dumps and think that all is darkness, trouble, loneliness and tragedy, but as life moves along and successive experiences of light and shade appear we learn that life's worth far outweighs its woe.

“Touch thou my soul that I may know
Life's worth more real than its woe!”

And Jesus says: "Courage! I have conquered the world!"

Jesus knew that the world was full of a number of things, but he was sure that in the long run we should all be as happy as kings—and happier, for the poet who used that figure did not live in this day and age. Kings are not happy any more in this age of democracy.

THE BIBLE HAS A LOT OF GLOOM IN IT
BUT MORE SUNSHINE

The Bible itself is full of gloom.

There is tragedy and heartache and loneliness in the Book of Books, for it is a cross-section of human life.

Jeremiah is one of the weeping, lamenting prophets.

He was by nature a cheerful fellow. He loved poetry and nature. He liked to be at home quietly with his books; but almost alone he had to expose the immoralities of his day. His conviction that the Temple would be destroyed subjected him to insults from the Temple priests even. The fights in which he became involved wearied him because they were alien to his own gentle nature. He often longed for a quiet lodge in the country where he might go and be alone to rest and meditate. He cursed the day that he was born and swore that he would quit preaching the word of the Lord but he was so on fire with his call and his visions that they were as a fire in his bones burning night and day.

Poor old Jeremiah sometimes felt that all was woe and suffering; all was unrighteousness and sin; and darkness and tragedy filled the world. But in spite of this intermittent viewpoint some of the most beautiful passages in the Old Testament are in Jeremiah.

Yes, even in his degenerate day all was not woe.

Bible historians declare that the better consciences of men were on his side. That is always true of a Prophet. Some one has said that a good man has the advantage of a bad man who is his enemy because that bad man's conscience is always on the side of the good man. So it was with Jeremiah, the Weeping Prophet.

The Ethiopian slave was moved with pity for him.

King Zedekiah heard him gladly and did all that he could to help him in his distress over social and religious conditions of that distressing day.

Even the Chaldeans treated him with the consideration due a Prophet.

The poor, miserable exiles themselves dragged him to Egypt and paid him homage as a kind of a god.

To read the book of Lamentations you would think that there was nothing in the Bible but woe and depression, gloom and despair.

If you want to know what the "Blue Monday" of the Bible is just go home and read the Book of Lamentations.

The Book of Lamentations consists of five poems whose subject is the sufferings of Judah and Jerusa-

lem during the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans in B.C. 586.

In these poems, the woes of the people: hunger, starvation, fear, sickness, confessions of sins, desperation are in every line.

There has long been a tradition both Jewish and Christian that poor old lamenting, weeping Jeremiah wrote this book and its poems. Whoever wrote it, it is a succession of gloom. However, even as gloomy as Lamentations is, it ends in a burst of sunshine, prayer and hope over the release from siege and captivity of the Chaldeans; and for favor in the eyes of God.

The next great gloom book of the Old Testament is Job.

This drama is a pathetic story of an old man's misfortunes, too well known to be mentioned in detail here—a word which has become the synonym for suffering and a figure which has been used for untold centuries as the personification of tragedy.

The whole world has turned against Job.

He is in complete and terrible despair. His family, his friends—all have forsaken him. His worldly goods have been destroyed. He is suffering in mind and body. Death has devastated his home; his cattle have died; his friends have forsaken him; his body is diseased; all is dark and all is woe!

There is no more desolate picture in all literature than this picture of the woes of Job. To-day whenever we want to speak of woe we speak of it in the pathetic figure of that gaunt, naked, forsaken, lonely old man. He stands out like the silhouette of a

war-scarred tree against the flaming background of the past world's woes.

In France this summer the most pathetic reminder of the World War I saw were gaunt, naked trees, still standing, with no leaves, no limbs, stricken, burned and broken. Pathetically tragic are these ruins of the war. So stands poor old Job.

But even Job learned that life's worth was more real than its woe.

At times he cursed the day that he was born just as did Jeremiah.

But even as he cursed, he cried out:

"Touch thou my soul that I may know
Life's worth more real than its woe!"

And the answer came floating back through the skies:

"Courage! for I have conquered the world!"

That is always the answer to life's woe from God and Christ.

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Even a casual glance at the poor, wandering, lost children of Israel, when they had left their Egyptian slavery under the leadership of Moses, will make a student of the Bible know that there were moments of extreme desolation and discouragement during those wandering years—those tragic, wistful, wandering years. Such defeat! Such unrest few leaders have had to bear as Moses. "The Ten Commandments," that noble motion picture, gives a picture of

this unrest and discouragement, when the whole crowd seemed to turn their backs on God and went back to animal worship, and the Golden Calf was set up while the lewd worship of sensualism was indulged in. Those were hard moments for Moses. We see this same conspiracy, this same discouragement, this same unrest illustrated in some parts of our advanced Masonry, and those of us who have gone through this work will recall the stricken leader and the confused followers. Tragedy and discouragement walked in their midst.

But at last came the Promised Land; at last came the dawn out of the night; at last came hope out of desolation even in that pathetic story of the tragedy of a wandering people; a people who had cried out time and time again, in their loneliness:

"Touch thou my soul that I may know
Life's worth more real than its woe!"

And the answer always comes back:

"Courage! for I have conquered the world."

One needs but to relate the tragic story of the last days of Jesus to see this principle illustrated in its most depressing atmosphere. What a desolate group the eleven were—aye—even the twelve—for more desolate than them all was Judas.

A last supper, a traitor in the midst; a fleeing Christ pursued by the Hounds of Hell; a dark Garden, and human weakness; a Christ praying alone in bloody drops of sweat, and a pathetic cry: "What,

could ye not watch with me one hour?" Then a cruel capture, insult and degradation to the sweetest spirit that the world ever knew.

God of Destiny, has there ever been such degradation?

Dragged from the Garden to the Court; insulted and despised; hooted at and hissed; spat upon, betrayed by Judas and denied by Peter; jeered at and maltreated; carrying and dragging his own cross on which he was doomed to die; at last crucified on a hill as a spectacle for man and beasts; between two thieves; on the despised cross; crying out in his utter darkness: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Then dawn, and the Resurrection; sunlight and white flowers, good cheer and holy laughter; and the world laughing with him; birds singing on every tree around the world; the oceans laughing against their shores because a thrill had trembled through the very earth with the earthquake; the very stars sang together that morning as they had never sung before; the heavens bright with glory; the angels shouting their Halleluiah Chorus. It was a glorious exemplification of all that I am trying to say in this sermon.

At times during that terrible experience the world seemed full of woe, even to Jesus, the most buoyant soul that ever lived. Even he gave out two most pathetic cries: "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" and again, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Even the buoyant Jesus gave up to despair. What a comfort that is to the rest

of us who become overwhelmed when friends desert us, hope turns to darkness, and despair reigns supreme. Even Jesus cried out:

“Touch thou my soul that I may know
Life's worth more real than its woe!”

And Jesus must have remembered his own words:
“Courage! for I have conquered the world!”

SOME MOMENTS IN LIFE WHEN THIS PRINCIPLE WILL HELP US

Human nature is such that these dark moments of despair come to all of us. We are so constituted that it would not be well for us if we had California all the time.

That is the thing that I like about the East in preference to California. I like the change from winter to spring. I like that glorious thrill of an awakening world; flowers blooming, grass blanketing the hills and fields, the streams running full, the trees surging with sap, the world shouting with its new birth.

Sometimes in the winter time we think that spring will never come. Just about this time in the winter we get to feeling that spring is so far away that it will never come again. But it always does. Spring always comes with a glad shout upon the hills of Hope. Glory! Glory! Spring always comes!

Sometimes we get to thinking, when a long stretch of foggy and gloomy days come, that we will never

see the sunshine again. There is nothing more depressing to a human being than a stretch of three or four days when the fog settles down, and we do not see the sun. We are such sensitive creatures that we cannot stand it when gloom comes and the sun hides its face for several days at a stretch.

We get to thinking then that life's woes are more real than its worth.

So is it with long nights. Long nights of sickness when a father watches over his child, or a mother—it seems that the dawn will never come.

I remember a pathetic story that Robert Louis Stevenson tells of how his old nurse used to carry him **at** night because he could not breathe lying down. That nurse used to carry him to the window and they would look out at other houses where lights were burning and imagine that there were other little boys in those houses who were sick and could not sleep and were waiting for the dawn to come.

How long the night of woe seems, when we are ill ourselves or watching up with some loved one who is ill!

How tragically long the weary hours of waiting, watching and suffering.

Life's woe seems very real then, very long, very black!

But the dawn always comes, just as the spring always comes, and just as the fog is always dissipated and just as the darkest days of gloom are always slit by the sunshine. Thank God that when we cry amid our terror:

"Touch thou my soul that I may know
Life's worth more real than its woe,"

that Christ answers: "Courage, for I have conquered the world."

Sometimes these dark moments of despair come because of our physical condition. We have sluggish livers, or our kidneys are not working. The best thing for that particular condition is exercise, fresh air, a fast of a day or two, less meat, and more vegetables and milk.

Fresh air, exercise, a vegetable diet, milk for a week will remake many a sluggish body, bring the dawn and the flush of health and bright sunshine across the human horizon.

The first thing that any human ought to do when that human being is haunted by forebodings is to find out whether or not there is some physical reason for this foreboding. When removed the sun shines again.

For be sure of this, that if we follow God's laws of health, happiness will be ours. He has made all and complete provisions for cheerfulness in our lives. He has not left us alone and desolate. He has provided for our health and happiness if we follow "The Way" with gladness and care.

Defeat and discouragement sometimes in our everyday human life seem to put us "down in the mouth." We promote certain projects and they turn out badly. They may be social plans or business projects. We may put all our money into a venture

and lose it all. We may trust a friend and find that friend has betrayed us. We may plan great victories and have those victories turn into defeats. There are a thousand and one things that make us blue, discouraged and hopeless. I need not mention specifically any of these things that depress and despoil us; that press us down; that keep us at the grindstone; that depress and discourage us until we feel that life has nothing but woes, and we cry out:

“Touch thou my soul that I may know
Life’s worth more real than its woe.”

And Jesus Christ always answers:

“Courage! for I have conquered the world.”

Doubt depresses us sometimes. We begin to doubt our friends. We begin to doubt God. We begin to doubt our own reason. We begin to doubt that God is in his Heaven and that all IS right with the world. We see so much unfaithfulness, so much unkindness, so much of human treachery. We pick up any daily paper and we read so much depressing news; news of divorce, news of scandal, law-breaking, murder. Thieves break into the homes of our own friends in our own neighborhood. Divorces and discord come into the homes of some of our intimates. Some one of our friends proves himself to have dirt in his soul; a preacher goes wrong. The whole world seems untrue.

Death comes with its devastating blight over our home. A little child, sweet as the flowers of dawn-

ing, is taken away. A wife goes suddenly. A father goes out to crank up an automobile on a cold morning, and comes in and in a few minutes complains of a pain around his heart and then drops off into the Eternal sleep. Dark clouds come. It seems that they never will be light again. A splendid daughter, in the full prime of beautiful womanhood, Christian womanhood, is suddenly stricken and the foundations of the world of faith are shaken; and all is gloom and hopelessness.

“These things come and come they will,
But there's a blessed Savior still;
There's a dawn and there's a day
There's a blessed God-lit way!”

And, in the midst of these gloomy hours we get to feeling that Hope has died forever from the earth. Then we cry aloud:

“Touch thou my soul that I may know
Life's worth more real than its woe!”

And Christ always answers:
“Courage! for I have conquered the world.”

GREAT GLOOMS THAT HAVE DEPRESSED HUMANITY

Humanity has passed through great cycles of gloom and depression in all of its history on the upward climb to God.

In fact the upward climb has been brought about by periods of depression and gloom.

The Glacial Period is a period of one of the great cycles of gloom. The world seemed about to become extinct at that time but we came out of it.

There have been periods of devastating famine when it seemed that the whole world would starve. There have been sections of the world stricken with famine constantly since Biblical days. The tragic stories of famine make up many of the blackest pages of world-history. Every nation has had its time of famine. We who live in a land of plenty do not realize what a period of real famine means.

There have been plagues that have swept the earth in what are called pandemics. The influenza was our most recent plague and it killed more people than the Great War with all of its terrible havoc. We all know those days of gloom and depression, with masks, death and desolation; men and women buried in trenches; continuous processions of dead bodies going through the streets. We felt in the midst of that that the whole world was woe!

When we were in the midst of the Revolutionary War we felt that it would never end. If you will see the Janice Meredith picture you will have more vividly brought to your mind the picture of the desolation of the soldiers of Washington; starvation, winter blizzards, little clothing, discouragement, despair; with a great European nation trained to war, and hired Hessians at our throats. What gloom those days brought us!

The Civil War brought these same days of gloom to our nation.

When the Southern armies had swept as far north

as Gettysburg, north of our own capitol at Washington, and seemed about to carry us to defeat; when the President and official papers were removed from Washington and the whole world seemed black with despair, then came that great Battle of Gettysburg when God stepped in and saved the world for Freedom and Democracy and held together this nation in order that it might in a later crisis of all humanity be the Savior of the world.

The World War was such a period.

I was in Paris when the Germans were within a half hour of Paris.

The *Daily Mail*, an English paper published in Paris, said: "We are at last with our backs to the wall. There is no longer any room to maneuver. The situation is desperate."

That conservative British paper said this because the Germans had driven the English back to the channel ports; they were upon Paris, they were raiding and bombing every day and night. Millions of men were dying. Refugees were pouring into Paris every night from Amiens and northern French cities. Few people had any hope left.

Then it all broke on Easter Day—like some Providential interference.

It was a glorious morning, with the sun shining. Good Friday of that week had been filled with gloom and depression in Paris. Clouds had covered the sky. The Big Bertha had penetrated the St. Gervais Chapel at the moment the people were worshiping.

It was the darkest hour that earth ever saw except the day that Jesus died. More boys were killed

that week on the road to Baupaumme than in any week in all the history of the earth.

And those of us who were there despaired in our souls crying out:

“Touch thou our souls that we may know
Life’s worth more real than its woe.”

And the answer of Jesus came back:
“Courage! for I have conquered the world.”

GREAT MEN HAVE HAD THESE MOMENTS OF DESPAIR
AS WELL AS THOSE OF US WHO WALK
MORE COMMON PATHS OF LIFE

Just now we are in the midst of a common depression over the enforcement of the Volstead Act. We hear so much scandal about it; and we hear so much ridicule about it that we get to feeling that all is hopeless.

We forget that only a small proportion of the United States of America breaks this law. We forget that we are to-day not making drunkards by the wholesale. We forget that this law has only had five years' trial and that nothing less than fifty years will really test it. It will take fifty years to kill off the habitual drunkards. It will take fifty years to educate the nation and the world, and by the time we get America educated the whole world will be dry.

I heard the most tremendous story of hope the other day.

The President of the United States can be trusted.

A friend of mine visited him a while ago and heard Mr. Coolidge's best friend come into the White House asking for the appointment of a certain man on the Law Enforcing Division of the Treasury.

Two things happened upon that request. President Coolidge refused to grant it. When asked why, he said: "I know that man to be opposed to the Volstead Act. He does not observe it personally. Therefore I will not appoint him to that office!"

"But he represents some of the heaviest contributors to your campaign funds, Mr. Coolidge! His friends who are your friends want him appointed. They say he will enforce the laws, even if he does not personally believe in that particular law."

"That is impossible and I will not appoint him!" said the President.

The two hopeful things about that are: that the President knew that man; and that he stands for the enforcement of the Volstead Act.

Sometimes we get into a panic over this law. We allow local situations to depress us. We are like blind sheep, led by the blind, and we even begin to wonder if the law is right. The law is right because it is a moral law. The law is right because two-thirds of the States and ninety percent of the people voted for it. The law is right because it comes after a long, slow process of education and enlightenment covering a period of fifty years. America will never go backwards on that or any other moral law. The law is right because it protects weakness—weak-

ness that does not offend and weakness that does, weakness of women and children, the victims of liquor, and weakness of men who drink it. The law will live unless we cowardly church people give the enemy consolation, and break down our own morals by whining ourselves!

Let us remember that Christ can overcome the world. Let us know that he is still at work; that he was back of the long years that brought about this God's good law and that he is still on the march, even if we do weaken like a lot of jellyfish structures.

I have recently been reading the lives of Roosevelt and Wilson. There have been several books on both of these great men issued. They are all fascinating.

I have observed that even in the lives of such fighting kings as these two men, there were moments of unutterable discouragement.

Time and time again in that fighting Roosevelt's life we hear him saying: "My day is through; my sun is setting," just before some of his greatest triumphs. Roosevelt knew what defeat was. He knew what discouragement was. He knew what hopelessness was. He did not admit it to the world, but his letters which have been published in various books show that he knew defeat time and time again and that he knew unutterable depression and gloom. When we find that a fighting hero like Roosevelt had his moments of depression, it gives the rest of us hope and courage. It makes us feel that depression is a universal trait.

Wilson had his terrible hours of defeat. In the Princeton fight for democracy he had allied against him, under the leadership of Dean West, millions of dollars and a divided Board of Trustees; and he came home so depressed and discouraged to his wife after a Board meeting that he had frequent nervous breaks and had to go to Bermuda. Those Board meetings would leave him blue and depressed for weeks and months.

William Allen White's book on Wilson has a chapter which he calls "When the Evil Days Came Not."

We all know the tragedy of the close of that sad life. We know of his great world ideal for peace, the Federation of Humankind dreamed by Tennyson so long ago; we know of his trips to Europe; of his fight for his dream; of his terrible isolation; of his trip across the continent; his health-break; his last years of physical weakness and gloom; his seeming defeat!

Those who read Mrs. Hurlburt's letters in "Liberty," those who read the William Allen White book, know how sensitive his Irish side was to those terrible blows. We know how they tore at his very soul. And yet Woodrow Wilson died a hero, a martyr; and to-day his dream is nearer fulfillment than ever before.

The episode of Lincoln's great hour of depression that Dr. Barton brings us in his "Life of Lincoln" is particularly revealing. That three days of depression and exaltation; those days when he said

that the Army, the Senate, his own Cabinet—even God—had forsaken him; followed by that supreme hour when Lincoln arose to his full physical and spiritual height and sent word back to the Senate: “I AM MASTER!”

That was Lincoln’s Gethsemane and his Easter dawning.

That was God at work.

That was Jesus Christ still here!

When Lincoln cried out in his despair:

“Touch thou my soul that I may know
Life’s worth more real than its woe.”

And the answer of the Christ man comes back:
“Courage! for I have conquered the world.”

Gloom does come. It came to Moses, it came to Jeremiah, it came to poor old Job, it came to the Poet of Lamentations; it came to Jesus in Gethsemane, it came to Lincoln, it came to Roosevelt, it came to Wilson; it comes in all wars and famines, it comes to everyday folks in sickness, doubt, defeat, ill-health and death. But that is not all of life. That is not even the most of life. God gave us more singing than weeping; he gave us more laughing than crying; he gave us more sunshine than gloom; he gave us more winter than summer in the world; he gave us more hope than despair; he gave us an upward swing that has never stopped. The human race is on the climb toward the white peaks. “To-day is better than yesterday and to-morrow will be better than to-day.”

In the midst of our gloom let us hear Robert Browning's great man-voice thundering down the ages:

“The year's at the spring
The day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!”

CHAPTER XI

God Taking Possession of the Soul

PROVERBS 8:22: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way!"

I SAMUEL 10:10: "The spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied!"

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

"And, O thou glorious majesty on high,
Come, and possess me as the birds that fly!"

This wise saying of the Book of Proverbs notes that we have been God's from the beginning.

It intimates that God possessed us before we were born and that we were dreams in his breast before we were realities in the world.

Just as it is true that a bridge, or a temple or a Cathedral is the dream child; the sole possession of an architect before it is put on paper, and before it becomes a thing of stone, brick and steel; so was it true that God possessed us in his soul before the beginning of the earth and its physical fullness.

God possessed us from the beginning, just as a musician possesses the dream-music of his symphony. A while ago I heard Gabrilowitsch and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra play a composition of Rubin Goldmark. It was called a "Negro Rhapsody." It was founded on the tunes and music of the Negro Spiritual, "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen

but Jesus." The orchestra played this rhapsody with the composer himself sitting in the box listening, and as I watched that composer, it was a joy to see the expression on his face as the beautiful ensemble of that great orchestra throbbed out the story of his dream.

So God must feel as he looks down upon his children and his world; his dream from the beginning of all time; the dream for which all the rest of the world was prepared from the beginning; his children for whom he prepared the fields of coal, his children for whom he prepared the Grand Canyons, and the Yosemites; his children for whom he prepared the beauties of the earth and sea and sky and the food therein; and the stars that that child might be guided back to heaven by. And so it is, that the wise writer in Proverbs seems to know that "the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way" and his day.

And the Symphonic Theme is merely an answer to that text. The text states that God possessed us from the beginning of all time, and the theme comes back and says: "Yes, we know that we were and are and ever shall be God's own but we have wandered far away from God since he set us down on this old earth alone, and now we want to get back to God, and we want him to take possession of us again. We want to come back home to him; to our own. We want God to possess us again. We are like a lost child on the streets, or a lost dog."

May I be pardoned this unusual illustration from life?

A week ago a little yellow dog was dumped out of an automobile at the gas station next door to the Stidgers. The people who dumped that dog out did not want that dog any longer and calmly deserted it. The little pup remained around the gas station all night and on Sunday morning when I was shaving I noticed this poor little, lost, lonely, bewildered dog. It would run like mad up to every child and every woman thinking that the child or woman was its owner. Then when it would be rebuffed or hear an unfamiliar voice it would slink back to the warmth of the gas station. Then another person would walk along the street and the poor little lonely dog would run out again in eager anticipation.

That dog wanted to be possessed. That dog wanted somebody to take it home, back home where it came from; back to its owner. It wanted somebody to claim it, to possess it, to take it, and give it a home, and love, warmth and food.

So is a little lost child on the streets of a city. It runs up to anybody and everybody. It wants to be possessed. It wants to be taken home. It wants somebody to take it up and care for it and love it and still its beating heart.

I love children, and I have many adventures with children but the sweetest I have had in recent months is an adventure that I have with little Junior Meredith. If I walk through the big dining room on Wednesday evening and Junior is there and he can't find his father or mother, my face is familiar to him, and he will at once reach out his little arms to me and say in so many words: "Come take me,

Uncle Bill! I want to be taken! I want to be possessed by somebody!

“I know your face and your voice, and you have some claim to me. I have seen you in my home and my father and mother trust me with you and you are all right, so just take me up, please!”

And what that little child is saying is just what the human heart says to God, the God from whom it has been lost awhile:

“And, O thou glorious majesty on high,
Come, and possess me, as the birds that fly!”

THE HYMNOLOGY OF THE CHURCH HAS EVER
UTTERED DESIRE TO BE POSSESSED

“Come, thou fount,” has this spirit echoing in its beautiful and haunting lines, for this great hymn ends with these four lines:

“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here’s my heart, oh, take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above!”

“I am thine, O Lord!” is another of these plaintive, wistful, haunting hymns, which begs God to take us back to his arms; to be possessed again:

“I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice
And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith
And be closer drawn to Thee.

CHORUS:

Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side."

The human heart is ever hungry for the God-heart and ever will be unhappy until it finds its old place back in the arms of God.

That ever-beautiful "Just as I Am" is a flying into the arms of Jesus like a bewildered bird from a beating storm:

"Just as I am without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

These old hymns have ever about them the hunger for God and for God's everlasting arms, such as the lonely cry in "Oh, then to the Rock let me fly; to the Rock that is higher than I."

The Hymnology of the church of God came out of inspired hearts, hearts that have sounded to the depths the need of God and the love of God. This great hymn recounts some of those experiences which drive human beings to God:

"Oh, sometimes the shadows are deep,
And rough seems the path to the goal;
And sorrows, sometimes how they sweep
Like tempests down over the soul.

CHORUS :

Oh, then to the rock let me fly,
To the rock that is higher than I;
Oh, then to the rock let me fly;
To the rock that is higher than I.

Oh, sometimes how long seems the day,
And sometimes how weary my feet;
But toiling in life's dusty way,
The rock's blessed shadow how sweet."

When we analyze these great hymns we find out two things about them: First, that they are the most beloved hymns and best known hymns in the church; second, that they express the thought of this sermon, which is the desire of a human being to fly back to the God from whence it came, the desire to be possessed by that God. And, whether these hymn writers knew it or not, they were singing about the same emotions that beat in the heart of the poet who sang my symphonic theme:

"And, O thou glorious majesty on high,
Come and possess me as the birds that fly."

The desire to be possessed of God is so deep-seated in the human heart because we were originally God-possessed; and then we wandered from God like prodigal sons; and we always want to get back to him, as my text suggests: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way!"

THE DESIRE TO BE POSSESSED IS A DOMINANT
DESIRE OF HUMANITY

We like to be owned by somebody.

We like to have somebody claim us as their possession.

I doubt if there is any more dominant desire in a human soul than the desire to be possessed.

“Whose baby are you?” is one of the first questions that a child hears in the dim beginnings of self-consciousness.

And, in turn, that child is taught to say, “Daddy’s baby!” or “Mother’s baby!”

When Betty was a little girl she was asked this ever regnant question of babyhood and her reply always was: “Mother’s dishwasher and Daddy’s poet.”

So it is that even from childhood’s dimmest dawn this little soul is taught that it belongs to somebody and to somebody specifically. There is never any doubt about that. That is the dominant note of love; that every human being is owned by somebody.

It is a beautiful thing; an adventure worth having; to see a child that can hardly speak a word, when questioned insist that it is “Daddy’s baby!” that it is owned by somebody.

It is out of this dominant desire of humanity that a young girl comes to her first thrill when a certain red-headed, freckled boy says, “My girl! Mary is MY girl!” He blushes when he says it, but he is satisfying something in Mary that is age-old—the desire to be possessed. When schoolday public

opinion gets to the place where it points out a certain girl as "Jim's girl" or a certain boy as "Jane's boy" or "Jane's beau" that is a happy moment.

There is as much of a thrill in knowing that one is somebody's "beau" as there is in the pride of possession itself. In other words: "The joy of being possessed is as great as the pleasure of possession—greater, I believe.

It is an outgrowth of this psychology that gives a girl such a thrill when it is finally a settled matter, even though there is no engagement; when a certain person gets to possessing her; to expecting that she will reserve all her "dates," all of her smiles, her time, her thoughts, her kisses, her desires for him. She likes that feeling—so I am told. She likes to be possessed.

And this psychology is as strong on the part of a man as it is a woman. He, too, likes to be possessed by somebody who owns him, and claims him, and acts as if she wants him for her own.

Out of this strange psychology also comes the glory of that great phrase:

"This is **MY** son!" I heard a woman say that, one day as she introduced her boy, just home from France—wounded and scarred; say it with such a tone as made me weep. "This is **MY** boy!" with just a slight emphasis on the "**MY**." But there was something just as beautiful in the way that boy looked at his mother when she said, "This is **MY** boy!" He looked at her as if he was proud to be her boy and proud to inspire in her the pride of possession; as if he enjoyed being hers.

"This is **MY** wife!" I have heard a man say in such a way as to give all who heard him say it a thrill. But that was not all of the thrill. It was as beautiful to see how much she enjoyed being possessed. There is a great glow in the glory of being possessed.

I can best illustrate this part of my sermon by the real story of a real woman. It appeared in a magazine recently. It was written by Jay Gelzer under the title, "Why Am I Married?" She is a woman with a career.

One day a business man asked her bluntly, "Why are you married?" adding, "I thought independent women had little use for the holy estate of matrimony."

This blunt question made her think. It made her ask herself that same question: "Why am I married?"

In this story she tells of how her parents died and left her alone in the world. She was always lonely. Nobody seemed to care about her or desire her.

A kindly doctor rescued her from an Orphans' Asylum. She says herself:

"I had no background of blood relationship, and it's a queer, lonely, unfinished sort of a feeling, that of not definitely belonging anywhere or to anybody. There is an isolation about it that even a small child can realize."

There was no cruelty in her life. Unlike many children who go through the world as orphans she did not have to bear the torture of cruelty and un-

kindness in addition to loneliness. Everybody was kind to her.

“What cruelty there was lay in that fact of not belonging.”

As she writes about her life she says that she seems to remember a little girl who remained with her book in a corner and tried to keep out of the way of people, a girl who did not want to disturb people, who never asked for anything. When Christmas came she got many presents but there was always the unhappiness of “not belonging”:

“Because for me there were no brothers, no grandparents, no sisters, nothing of my very own.”

Then came her first love. His name was Harry—a warm, friendly, considerate Irish boy—and this girl who had never belonged to anybody summed it all up by saying:

“There were just two kinds of people in the world for me: those that I needed and those who needed me. I wanted to be needed and loved.”

“I was, in our young set, acknowledged as Harry’s ‘Girl,’ a term not linked with disrespect, but serving instead as a badge of distinction.”

They often found their initials carved together in the heart of a white birch tree or scrawled together on a brick wall.

“And, outwardly scowling, we were inwardly radiant, for that meant that we belonged to each other. That put a song into all my days.”

Then came tragedy into that love affair, for another girl named Kathleen took a fancy to Harry

and he went out with her now and then. The girl who tells this story says that the old decision had to be made:

“You can’t come to see me and go to see her also. You’ll have to choose between us.”

“You can’t tell me what I must do!” replied Harry and that was the end of that sixteen-year-old adventure in love.

Later this girl married and had children—two boys. She also became a famous singer. She had to neglect her children some; to turn them over to a nurse a lot, and she says that very often she would catch a look in the eyes of her boys that would remind her of her own lonely days when she didn’t seem to belong to anybody and she wondered, if in giving herself to her art, she was losing her boys. However her art was great and her gifts so striking that she had to continue.

Finally a great night came. The premier had been advertised to the ends of the city.

The great stage loomed about her like a forest or a great plain:

“I felt dwarfed by the very size of it. The music stopped. The spotlights came down from above and turned my dress to a flame of silver. I steeled myself to what must always be an ordeal.

“And in that moment, above the hush, I heard a voice:

“‘That’s MY MOTHER!’ said the voice.

“It was a fiercely possessive young voice, and very, very full of pride.

“I smiled. The audience smiled. We were

friends immediately. But I was none too steady behind my smile, because that moment represented to me the winning of a fight."

"THAT'S MY MOTHER!"

We all know what that thrill means. That is the thrill that comes when we know that we belong; that somebody wants to possess us!

That is one of the great dominant desires of the human soul.

Sometimes people say that the human being is greedy; that it is selfish; that all it wants is something for itself; that it merely desires possessions. But we who have caught the gleam of the truth of this idea know that the desire to BE possessed is just as great as the desire to possess in a human heart.

"That is MY daddy!" spoken with a note of pride has given me more laughter in my heart, song in my soul, thrill in my nerves, and joy in my life than any phrase that I know. No man is so male, so strong, so aloof that he does not desire to be possessed by his children, his wife, his loved ones, his friends.

And it is just this thing in the human soul—the desire to be possessed—body and soul—the desire for something stronger and finer to come in and take possession of that soul that is expressed in my theme this morning:

"And, O thou glorious majesty on high,
Come and possess me as the birds that fly!"

THIS DESIRE TO BE POSSESSED IS SYMBOLIZED BY
THE GROWTH OF RELIGION THROUGH
TIME

The first characteristic of religion was that of giving self over to some higher power in trances.

The religious leaders of the people were those leaders who could throw themselves into a trance and while in that trance they were supposed to receive messages from the gods.

There was even a physical element of this desire to be possessed that entered into the old worship that Moses thundered against when he came down from Sinai and found that the children of Israel had given themselves over to this type of worship which was symbolized by the Golden Calf.

The very first instinct of religion was this desire to give one's self over to something besides one's self. Its first expression was ignoble, as all true students of religion know; so ignoble that we shudder when we run across relics of it as we do in Egypt, in the whole Oriental world, and even in such ruins as Pompeii and elsewhere in Europe.

However it was the best they knew. It was crude but it was real to them.

It was the first faint glimmerings of real religion awakening in the souls of humanity, this desire to give one's self physically to the priests and to the gods. Abuses, terrible to contemplate, arose from this low germ of religion, this groping towards a something sacrificial.

Then came a second stage of religious worship,

That was the stage when the priest gave himself over to the possession of "Spirits." He allowed himself to drop off into a trance. He gave himself over to the gods of his day completely and with abandonment.

The Old Testament Prophets have much thundering against this type of worship because they have come to preach a greater truth. But that was a part of the growth of religion; that part where men and women threw themselves into trances; gave themselves over into the possession of something. The Prophets of the Old Testament said that they were "possessed with Devils or Demons."

There is even a survival of this type of crude worship in churches and religions where people allow themselves to be hypnotized; or when people give their wills, their souls, their whole selves into the possession of a medium, a healer or somebody else. This is not right. No man or woman dare give his mind or his soul over to any other human being. No man or woman dares to climb down from the throne of his own soul; and to abrogate the rights of his own kingship as far as his mind is concerned. That is merely the relic of a religious barbarism of a past age.

The School of Hypnotism, the school of autosuggestion and such, as far as religion is concerned, are tinkling cymbals and sounding brass; relics of the very mud-period of religious growth.

In the Oriental religions, such as the worship of Buddha, there is that same desire to give one's self over in self-hypnotism to something else; to drop

off into Nirvana, complete soul isolation; into a sort of a mental and spiritual coma.

Out of this same growth has come a truly great thing of a religious nature: the spirit of sacrifice.

Out of this desire to be possessed has come the spirit of sacrificial living and life.

That is one of the dominant notes of true religion. But it is not a physical sacrifice; but a spiritual sacrifice which makes it noble.

Christ was the flowering of this spirit of the desire to be possessed for when Jesus Christ died on the Cross he was saying

“Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee!”

He was saying: “Here am I, send me!”

He was saying: “Not only my hands, Lord, but my—”

It is curious to know also that whereas in the Old Testament the idea of “Possession” was the idea of being “possessed” by Demon or an Evil Spirit, a fit of epilepsy, or the Devil, and even in the New Testament we remember the story of the swine and the poor fellow “possessed by a Devil,” yet this figure of speech finally came to a purer and finer meaning, for we continually read in the New Testament of men who were “possessed of God”; who had so given themselves over to Christ as to be “Christ possessed”; who had so completely given their all to Christ as to be said to be “possessed.” That is the flowering of this whole truth.

Whereas in the beginnings of religious truth, men and women gave themselves over to be possessed by priests and Baal worship—and the animal worship—in these days, a man who is “possessed” has given himself over to Christ-Possession, or God.

To give one's self over unto the possession of the physical is ignoble indeed; but to give one's self over into the possession of Christ is glory and honor, world without end.

Two outstanding quotations in the spirit I take.

In I Samuel 10: 10 and 18: 10 we hear: “And when they came thither to the hill, behold a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.”

In Luke 1: 70 there is an admission that God takes possession of human beings and talks through them:

“As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began.”

I have not gone into this matter of possession in any detail for this sermon. But the summary of the thought I suggest is that:

First: Primal religions inspired worshipers to give themselves over to be possessed, especially in their bodies, in animal worship.

Second: Men and women gave themselves up to bestial things in the name of God to satisfy a primal urge toward all the worship they knew.

Third: Later this developed until men called priests gave themselves up to be “possessed” by a sort of trance, wherein they heard voices, and saw visions, and prophesied.

Fourth: Buddhism teaches its adherents to give themselves up into the "possession" of Buddha or God or worship until they have abdicated reason and personality and have merged with the Oneness.

Fifth: This giving one's self up to be "possessed" developed into the high beauty of Sacrifice and Prophecy in the Christian religion and finally, in that glowing example of Christ dying on Calvary, giving himself up into the possession of men who crucified him for the sake of humanity.

And as he died he sang in his soul:

"And, O thou glorious majesty on high,
Come and possess me as the birds that fly!"

"Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done!"

That is the *summum bonum* of good; that is the final step in religion; that is the answer to man's most dominant impulse; this giving over of one's self to be "possessed" of God and Christ for the good of one's own soul and for the good of other souls. When one has come to a willingness to give "possession" to God, then one has come to the final moment of religious resignation. That is the Christian's Nirvana. That is the Christian's glory. That is the Christian Cross of God.

SOME SIMPLE SYMBOLS OF THIS GREAT TRUTH

I never see a violin lying in a case that I do not see a wistful desire to be possessed in its **very** form, its strings.

It seems merely to be waiting for that triumphant moment when the master comes into the room, takes it fondly to his fingers, places it to his neck, and the violin waits to be "possessed" of the master; waits with all of its untold music, waits with all of its unexpressed dreams; waits with all of its pulsing heart-beats of sublime music; waits with its unsounded depths of gushing springs of melody; waits for the Master touch, crying as it waits: "Oh, Come, great Master, and Possess me, for without Thee I am dumb and musicless. I await thy coming to fulfill my destiny. I await thy touch to leap to life. I await thy love, to live. Come, and take me up, and possess me completely, oh, my Owner and my Master!"

"And, O thou glorious majesty on high,
Come, and possess me as the birds that fly!"

I have seen two or three *Æolian Harps*. I saw one on the window sill of a friend. I saw one across a river in France. I saw one on a mountain top in California. I saw one in the great gaping flute of the Grand Canyon. I saw one in a forest of redwood trees in California.

I never see an *Æolian Harp* in repose—whether it is a simple harp of wires constructed by the hand of man, a great harp of wires across a stream, a harp of a canyon's mouth or a harp of great trees, lying in repose, without any wind blowing—that I do not feel that I would like to hang around until the wind blows to hear that *Æolian Harp* make sweet music when the wind touches its strings.

Any kind of an *Æolian Harp* is a wistful thing to me, without the winds.

A forest of trees always seems to be waiting, waiting, waiting for the winds to blow. A mechanically constructed *Æolian Harp* seems also always to be waiting for the brawny hands of the winds. A canyon mouth seems always to be waiting for the soushing winds to make sweet music in and through it.

An *Æolian Harp* seems always to be helpless without the winds.

Harps ought to be playing; Harps ought to be singing; Harps ought to be making sweet music.

Harps always seem to be saying in their silent loneliness and wistfulness: "Come to me, brawny winds; finger me with thy great hands; brush briskly over my strings, and make sweet music through my soul, forever and a day. I need you. Come, mighty winds, and take possession of me, and do with me what Thou wilt! I am mute without Thee; mute forever. But when thou hast possessed me, I am filled with eternal music fit for angels."

So it is with a Harp standing alone in an empty room. So it is with a great Pipe Organ. So it is with a Flute lying idle on a table in a music room.

In my town there is a great Murphy organ. It is the gift of a wealthy man to the Symphony Orchestra. I attended the Symphony the other night and noted that there is only one program all year which is arranged for this great organ's use. The rest of the Symphony Season it stands mute and

silent, as far as this great musical organization is concerned.

When I read that notice at the Symphony I felt a great lump in my throat. I felt sorry for that great organ, with such capacities as it has for music. I felt as lonely for it as I have for a woman who wanted to be possessed by a home and husband and children. I felt as sorry for that great, unused organ as I have felt for little orphan children at Christmas time, children who were hungry to be possessed by mother arms. I felt as sorry for that great organ as I have felt at times for a lonely boy in the city at Christmas time, a boy who wants to "belong" to somebody. I felt as sorry for that great organ as I have felt so many times for a human soul that has not been possessed by God and Jesus Christ, who still has not been touched by the fingers of God, whose real emotional keys are mute, whose real spiritual stops have never been sounded, the music of whose life is still lying unexpressed. That is a lonely state to be in.

There was that great organ waiting for the master touch. It seemed to be crying out to the world: "Come and possess me as the birds that fly, oh, thou master. Come unto me, Master Guilmant, from thy dead wasteland; come, and mayhap thou canst play sweeter music on me than ever thou couldst in the olden days when thou didst walk this earth. Now that thou hast learned what celestial music is, thou mayst be able to play eternal anthems and symphonies on me. I await thee, O Master Eddy! Come,

and play on me such music as will shake the world awake, like some Miltonic master's theme of Eternal Ethics.

“Come and possess me! I wait! I am dead without Thy touch!

“My Vox Humani stops. My Viols, my sweet plaintive violins, my flutes, my chorus of sopranos and tenors—all, all are mute without Thee! I give myself unto Thee this day! Come and possess me!”

“O thou glorious majesty on high;
Come and possess me as the birds that fly!”

“And the spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied.”

CHAPTER XII

“Clearing a Free Way for the Feet of God”

LUKE 3:4: “Make the way ready for the Lord,
level the paths for him.”

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

“One fire was on his spirit, one resolve—
To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God!”
—*Edwin Markham.*

The poet—my friend—is here describing in this great poem the Immortal Lincoln. In this poem he tells of the crisis that was upon America; the storm that was brooding; that the Norn Mother saw the “Whirlwind Hour” hurrying on; that she came from the “Heaven of Heroes” to make a man to fit the need.

She made that immortal man to fit the need out of the red earth in him:

“The smell and smack of elemental things;
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;
The good will of the rain that loves all leaves;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well;
The courage of the bird that dares the storm;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The tolerance and equity of light.”

What did the Norn Mother make this man for?
To give God a chance in America.

We have known this experience of clearing the way for one who follows in American cities. We have seen mounted policemen and motorcycle officers shooting down Fifth Avenue, Woodward Avenue, State Street, and Market Street to clear a free way for the feet of Pershing or the marching heroes of the World War; for the President, for Father Joffre, for Foch. We know what that phrase means in its everyday interpretation: "Clearing a free way for the feet of God."

We have seen the advance heralds in some great European procession running ahead to herald the approach of the coming King. I have seen such heralds in Oriental countries where much is made of this monarchical pageantry. I remember once in Tokyo the coming of the Mikado. Suddenly the street cars stopped and the blinds were pulled down. This seemed a strange procedure. When the conductor was asked why this procedure, Mrs. Stidger was told that the Mikado was coming and that it was against the law for anybody to look down upon his majesty.

So these typical American women instead of sitting still in the street car and letting an Emperor go by unwitnessed, left the car, that nothing might pass their tourists' eyes by; especially such a sight as the passing of the Mikado—the Son of Heaven.

Then there came the blare of trumpets and the sound of music and the voice of the Herald crying:

"Clear the way for the Emperor! Clear the way for the Emperor!"

All vehicles went down side streets. Human beings scurried to cover in a twinkling. The Emperor was coming and the advance guard was clearing a free way for his feet to pass.

That was an impressive scene to witness.

There is always something impressive about advance agents for emperors or actors—and to the American mind they are in the same class. We view them with the same complacent, sight-seeing amusement. We see the flaring red bill-posters of the advance agent of the circus; we see the flaring publicity of the advance agents of an Isadora Duncan or some European actress; and we see the advance agents of the Oriental monarchs and we smile at the pageantry and the display and the show; sometimes we laugh.

But there IS an advance agency that we respect, admire, love and revere. That is the business of:

"Clearing a free way for the feet of God."

There is something about the picture of this great rugged, ax-swinging Lincoln that thrills us as we see him lift the ax to cut at the root of wrong in American life.

We see the dense forests and the tangled under-growth of sin and selfishness. We see this great giant with his mighty ax swing it over his shoulder to do what?

"To clear a free way for the feet of God!"

That is the task supreme!

That is an heroic mission to be out on!
That is a task for a "Giant Hour!"
That is a task over which the angel anthems ring out:

"Clearing a free way for the feet of God!"

What a contrast there is between the Oriental pageantry of the bespangled heralds who proclaim the coming of an earthly King and the single, lonely figure of a giant like Lincoln, hewing a way for God—alone, like a great giant—uncouth, bare-armed, poor and mean in his dress, swinging a great ax to pioneer the path of Eternity. That is a supreme thing to be doing and we all have that liberty and that high joy!

PIONEERS ARE ALWAYS CLEARING A FREE WAY FOR
THE FEET OF GOD

I have just read Vachel Lindsay's "Johnny Appleseed." It is a beautiful new poem by this great democratic American poet. It is the story of a Pioneer. It is the story of a strange character who brought apple seeds to the new world from the old. He went through the Eastern States westward to the Mississippi Valley scattering apple seeds wherever he went. The people called him a fool and honestly thought that he was a fool. Why not? He was not working at some paying task. He was not laying up treasures on earth. He was not putting money into stocks and bonds and providing for his old age.

No! He was not providing for his old age,

thank God, but he WAS providing fruit and beauty of blossom and nutrition for unborn generations. He was beautifying the hillsides in Spring and sweetening many a household of a winter night.

Johnny Appleseed was like a tramp in our day only a tramp with a useful hobby and passion. He became known in every pioneer community as a strange character who was always poor and who went about scattering apple seeds everywhere.

Little children laughed at him and threw stones at him and their elders talked about him with superior smiles as if to say, "Poor fellow. He is not a good provider! He is a fool like the poets! He makes no money. What a fool!"

These are the spiritual pioneers. These are men of the **VALIANT VOYAGES**—a phrase of which I am fond—as a father is fond of his children.

What was Johnny Appleseed doing, my friends?
"Clearing a free way for the feet of God."

How do you make that out?

Because he was planting apple trees for future generations and Christ said that "whosoever doeth good to one of my children doeth good unto me!"

Shout! And laugh aloud, Johnny Appleseed! You are on God's business. You may be one of God's fools but you are on God's business; you are preparing **HIS** way!

All the Valiant Voyagers of the earth have gone out to prepare a free way for the feet of God. Columbus started across the Atlantic to find a way to the Indies. He pioneered new paths for mankind to take.

He took the Valiant Voyage and in so doing he led the way for the Pilgrim Fathers seeking religious liberty, and without knowing it, Columbus was:

“Clearing a free way for the feet of God.”

And Columbus is typical of all explorers and pioneers. The spirit of God is in them with its everlasting urge. They pioneer unknown and unhewn paths through the forests and over the mountain trails and across the trackless seas. What doing?

“Clearing a free way for the feet of God.”

Missionaries are at this huge business.

In an interview with Mr. Ford recently he told me that a missionary by the name of Bailey had been spending considerable time at Dearborn. Mr. Ford has become so interested in China that he is seriously considering building a new hospital—a duplicate of the Ford Hospital—in China.

I asked him about missions and missionaries and what he thought of them and was surprised and delighted when he said:

“They are the pioneers. They make the paths. Business follows. Without them we could not go into new countries. Commerce owes much to missions and missionaries. They go first and cut the paths and we follow with our business.”

I was pleased to hear this great business king admit that this was true. I have heard missionaries say it and I have observed it for myself. I have known that the missionaries were the pioneers in Japan and China and everywhere; that they went ahead and won the goodwill of the natives and that business followed.

But I am very sure that the missionaries would never risk their lives and jeopardize the health of their babies just to pioneer the way for American business. That is not the impetus that makes them pioneers. They are not clearing the way for ships of commerce as a prime motive, for they truly are "Clearing a free way for the feet of God!"

THOSE WHO HAVE CLEARED A FREE WAY FOR THE FEET OF GOD IN THE BIBLE

The Prophets were all pioneers of God clearing a free way for his feet.

They were interpreters of the great Jehoval heart.

They were like great men with spiritual plows plowing the soil of human hearts, digging deep into human souls; getting the soil ready for the coming of Christ.

Then came another great Pioneer who came preparing the way.

John the Baptist was that man. He came preparing the way for the Christ who was to follow.

This is one of the most beautiful and dramatic friendships of the Bible. Here was a man whose primary task was to wane, that a greater sun might wax. Here was a man who had great personal following who was ready to give up fame and popularity and life itself that his task might be complete. It is a tremendous picture.

John the Baptist said: "One cometh after me the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unlatch!"

The other day I went to Syracuse, New York, to

speak. I had been scheduled to speak there. But Mr. Edwin Markham came to visit me and I had so many engagements away from home that weekend that I was not here to greet him and I had to go away before he was ready to go, so, in order that I might have a chance to visit with the poet I took him with me, much to the surprise and delight of the students and folks of Syracuse.

I went on and spoke just as had been scheduled but cut my talk half an hour short with this explanation:

“The reason I cut this talk short is so that I may introduce one who cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unlace.

“I introduce to you Mr. Edward Markham, author of ‘The Man with the Hoe.’” That was a great and hilarious hour of joy for me.

I know just the sense of exultation that John the Baptist had in giving up his speaking engagements in order that Jesus, who was so much greater than he, might have the ear and the hearts of the people. I know just exactly how he felt in having such an honor and such a joy. I know the delight that thrilled his heart to tears that he was chosen to do this great thing.

Some people may pity John the Baptist but they do not understand and that is sad—sad indeed.

For what was he doing? He was:

“Clearing a free way for the feet of God!”

And that is a glorious task for anybody to do, and then he died with immortal fame enshrining his death.

Do you seek greatness, boys and girls, men and women?

Do you desire undying fame forever and a day; such fame as Savonarola had; such fame as Martin Luther had; such fame as Wesley had; such fame as Asbury had; such fame as Cromwell had; such fame as Lincoln had; such fame as Roosevelt had; such fame as all truly great men have had? You may have it by:

"Clearing a free way for the feet of God!"

Do you seek immortality?

You may find immortality by spending your life in:

"Clearing a free way for the feet of God!"

Then came Jesus himself.

What did he come for?

What did he live for?

What did he die for?

He came, he lived, he died for the purpose of:

"Clearing a free way for the feet of God!"

That is the genius of the Bible.

That is its meaning; that is its worth to humanity; that is its very reason for being; that is its universality and immortality.

That is the reason why it lives and spreads and goes on down the centuries. Because from Genesis to Revelation it is written and talked and preached; because its characters, great and small, from Moses to the Master Christ; because from the Creation to the Cross; because from its dawn to its starlit night, it is:

"Clearing a free way for the feet of God!"

GREAT MEN OF EARTH WHO HAVE CLEARED A FREE
WAY FOR THE FEET OF GOD

There have always been great souls on earth who have stood in the impenetrable forests of ignorance, superstition, and selfishness; and with resolute and determined hearts they have swung the ax of intelligent criticism and knowledge at the root of wrong until they have cut a clear way for the feet of God.

Savonarola was such a man.

In Florence, Italy, he saw ignorance, profligate living, and undemocratic injustice. He preached from the cathedral steps to the common people; and was burned for his passion to see humanity saved.

In other words he wanted to cut a clear way for the feet of God to the hearts of humanity. He wanted God to get at folks and he was determined to cut the barriers down, to hew the way for God's approach.

Martin Luther was such a path-maker.

The Catholic Church had said that the only way to get to God was through the intercession of the confessional and the priests. Luther said that there was a more direct way and that was from the human soul to God, with no human intermediary in between.

He was a direct action man in spiritual things.

This made Martin Luther the Protester. That made the Protestant Church.

How did the Protestant Church come about?

Because a great soul wanted to clear a free way

for the feet of God to get to a human soul and for a human soul to get to God.

That was a great clearing that he cut and it gets wider as the years go by.

Lincoln was all that Markham's verse says of him.

Every act of his life was the act of a man who was trying to clear away the underbrush.

Mr. Ford said to me a while ago that if you didn't watch out, an organization would grow up, like a tropical jungle, so thick with jobs that you couldn't get through.

So now and then Mr. Ford takes a figurative ax and hews a way through his organization by cutting out the jobs. It has not been an unusual experience for a man to go to lunch and to come back to find his desk and job gone. Mr. Ford had been in there to clear a way through a forest of jobs.

So Lincoln came to a great crisis in human affairs. He saw an entire race deprived of human rights. He knew that that was not God's way of wanting things to exist.

So he took the ax of public opinion and struck deep at the roots of a great human wrong to:

"Clear a free way for the feet of God."

WE MUST LEARN IN OUR INDIVIDUAL LIVES TO
CLEAR A FREE WAY FOR THE FEET OF GOD

The first thing that we are sure of, is that God wants to get at us. He loves us but if we will not let him at our hearts he will never come in. The

beautiful and simple figure of speech of Jesus standing outside the door knocking, eager to be let into our hearts, is most typical of his love.

He wants in, but he is not an intruder. He will not smash down the barriers himself for he has left the choice of that great matter to us.

It is up to us to make the way clear to our hearts for his feet to tread.

There is a lot of unsightly underbrush cluttering up the front yards of most of our lives. We are like a house, the front yard of which has not been properly cared for. Or we are like a field full of weeds that has not been made beautiful for his coming.

We have a lot of false growth filling our front yards; the front yards of our minds and the front yards of our souls.

Education that leaves God out is not true education.

Education that leaves God out is a cluttered up education.

We gather too many false ideas.

We get the idea that making money is the supreme thing in life. That is one of the unsightly spiritual growths that chokes the front yards and the gardens of our souls and minds. I believe that in a city this is particularly true. We see fortunes made over night. We see the most fascinating industry in the world growing up at our very doors.

We get to thinking that money, machines, wheels and business are important. These are the false

scrub oaks that are growing up in our front yards and our gardens.

The boy who gets to thinking that wheels, and machines, and great factories and things are important, needs to swing a great ax at the root of false ideas and clear a free way for God to get into his immortal soul. Clean out your front yards and the gardens of your mind and soul. Let God walk in that Garden. Make a way for him and a place for him in your lives.

A lot of young men these days are getting the idea that POWER is worth while. That is not true. Men of Power soon die like the great King in Egypt whose tomb is being opened. He used to be "some boy!" He used to be a Killer in his own home town! He was the Kaiser of his time. But he, too, found out that when you get ready to be laid away in a costly tomb, with chariot wheels of gold, jewels, and costly perfume, that all the power on earth didn't mean anything at that particular hour.

"Power! Power! Come to me! I summon you! I am the King! I command great armies! There is Death! Slay Him! His fingers are at my throat! Take him from me! I command you! Kill him!"

But the soldiers of the King, which represented his POWER, were at naught when they fenced with Death. Their swords pierced thin air. There was no substance. Death was Conqueror over King. With all his power the old King of the Nile was a plaything in the hands of Death.

And Death had his own way.

And they laid the king away in garments of gold and his body scented with perfumes of great worth, the scent of which still clings to his opening tomb—but to-day a curious world tramps past his sleeping-couch and pays ten cents to see his coffin while the funny papers paragraph his highness and his power of yesterday is like a whiff of dust from his age-old rotting coffin. That is what Power is in the long run—a run of three thousand years, say. It is a whiff of dust from a mummy's coffin.

That is what Power is. That is all. A mummy for a curious world to gaze upon and smile at the old duffer's ears or nose.

Don't litter up your mind with the idea that power means anything, even such power as the Kaiser had. That is a fallacy. That is wrong guessing!

If the idea of power means much and has grown up in your front yard, for God's sake get an ax and clear a free way for the feet of God!

God wants to come to every heart. Get the way cleared for his feet and he will come into your hearts and make you immortal and invincible. That is heroic work to do but worthwhile.

The following story from the book of a friend of mine will illustrate what I mean. If we clear the way in our own souls for the feet of God he will come into our lives. It is our duty to clear the way. It is our part of the task to hew the way clear of selfishness, of impurity, of materialism, of licentiousness and sin; clear a free way and God will come.

The way of his coming is up to him. There are many churches and many creeds and many ways that wind and wind. Some say that man may come to God one way and some say another. Catholics and Protestants differ on this; Jews and Gentiles differ. But that is not important. All may be right.

Our part is not to worry about how God gets to us but our part is to clear the way for his coming; to get everything ready.

Make your heart beautiful for his coming as did the old blacksmith—“Conrad the Cobbler”—in “How the Great Guest Came.”

Make your humble home beautiful for his coming and before you know it he will slip in.

Now to the story:

“A gentleman of France, who had been delighted with the rapturous warblings of the nightingales of the forests of Sierra Morena, greatly desired to hear in the forests of his own estate the same entrancing music. No nightingale had ever been seen or heard within his woods, but he set himself to woo their presence. He reasoned that if he should make his grounds perfectly adapted to the comfort and happiness of nightingales, the unknown messengers of nature would in some way carry the news to the sweet singers and they would come. He undertook to make a perfect home for nightingales, and trusted nature to do the rest. Accordingly he banished cats and hawks and screech-owls, for the nightingale nests low and sings long, and is an easy prey to all these enemies of birds. He caused many places

in the woods to be scratched up and had a kind of earthworms of which nightingales are peculiarly fond planted liberally in accessible spots. He searched the literature of the world on the subject of nightingales and their habits, and every suggestion that pointed toward making a paradise for nightingales was at once put into practice. He waited a whole year, and not a note from a nightingale fell upon his ears. Another year passed by, and though the preparations for their comfort went on unceasingly, the invited guests remained aloof. But when the third springtime came, one night, as the shadows were darkening, his ear was delighted and his heart thrilled with the song of the nightingale. A single pair of birds had found their way to that choice retreat. But they were only the pioneers of multitudes that were to follow them. Before many springs had passed his woods were so vocal with the songs of these famous birds that his estate was known far and wide as 'The Garden of the Nightingales.'

Christ will come if you make ready the way and set the day.

CHAPTER XIII

“A Sense of Glad Awakening”

PSALM 17:15: “I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.”

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

“And through and over everything
A sense of glad awakening.”

—*Edna St. Vincent Millay.*

It is a beautiful thing to see an awakening of the earth each day as this wondrous miracle repeats itself in wood and field and tree. Those who have been abroad at the awakening time of the great good earth have seen a wondrous thing happen. It is as if Old Mother Earth hurried from bed to bed and shouted and sang and coaxed and lured her children awake. It was as if she called each flower by name and said: “Awake, my pretty baby Violet! Awake, my Golden Dandelion! Awake, my pretty Lilac Flower! It is dawn! Shake off thy robes of dew and rise to greet the sun!”

There is a sense of glad awakening also when winter has flown and spring comes abroad in the land; when snows melt and crocuses peek their heads above the earth; when the chorus of crickets and frogs is heard in the land and tulips blossom and green grass shoots slip quietly through the dark

earth; when streams run to overflowing with sun-melted snows. When spring comes with its showers of apple blossoms on every hill and dale; when birds begin to build their nests and great golden winged moths begin to mate there is a sense of Glad Awakening over everything, everywhere.

After a shower there is also a sense of glad awakening in the earth. The dry, dead desert begins to blossom as the rose, the dusty fields take on new life; the apple trees freshen up their green leaves and everywhere there is a beautiful sense of awakening over the world and the earth:

“And through and over everything,
A sense of glad awakening.”

EXPERIENCES THAT AWAKEN HUMAN LIFE

When puppy love comes into life there is a sense of glad awakening flows through a boy's soul or a girl's soul like electricity. We laugh a lot at puppy love but psychologists know that it has awakened more lethargic boys and girls than any other one force on earth at that period of life. When the first faint feelings of love come to a boy or girl there is a beautiful sense of glad awakening.

Responsibility awakens the human powers. Often a child or a man or a woman gets to depending upon others and they never realize that they have powers of their own until somebody or some upheaval of an experience comes along and awakens them to responsibility.

There is nothing that a parent can do and there is nothing that a teacher can do, and nothing that a preacher can do that is more important than giving somebody work to do that requires their own powers to do it; that makes it necessary that they take some responsibilities.

Parents should learn this secret and give every child some definite responsibility.

Teachers who are wise learn this very early in their career and they soon come to be known as fine teachers.

Preachers who delegate work to others and who give others as much to do as possible have stronger churches. Why? Because there is a sense of glad awakening when folks learn that they have powers that they know not of. They only discover these powers when somebody gives them something to do. One never discovers his power—nor child—nor man—nor woman—until they get responsibility.

Great Burdens generally bring a sense of awakening to a human being. How often have we heard it said that a certain man or woman seemed to be a butterfly or a social moth flying about in the light until some great burden was thrust upon that person's shoulders and he had a sudden awakening of the soul under this heavy burden; an awakening that astonished all of his friends. I have seen this happen time and time again—that some great burden has brought also with it a great awakening to power and poise and gentleness and beauty of character that even the person burdened knew not that he or she had.

Sorrow often brings a great awakening to human souls. Sorrow acts like the plow in the springtime acts upon the soil. The plow of sorrow turns the soil of the soul up. It cuts deep and it hurts as it digs. It tears into the soil of the soul but after the plow of sorrow has dug deep and gone through and upturned and uprooted there follows in its trail, in its wake, like the white foam in the wake of a ship a beautiful path of flowers and grain and grass. It took the plow of pain to open up unguessed powers and unknown beauty of character. With sorrow often comes a sense of Glad Awakening. That was my own experience in the death of my mother. That sorrow was like a deep plow that went far into my soul but behind it came a path of spiritual flowers.

When Jesus Christ comes into a human soul there is a sense of Glad Awakening in that human soul. Souls that have been dead and lifeless in sin or indifference have suddenly awakened with new powers and new hopes and new visions when Jesus Christ comes in with his awakening power of love.

There are many influences that keep a soul dormant.

One is straight, outright Sin. Sin often crushes a soul. It always limits a soul.

Another is sheer spiritual indifference; a don't care spirit; an utter lethargy. Of all the great sins that the soul can sin the sin of indifference is one of the most blighting. I pity a man or a woman who is indifferent; whose soul cannot be touched or stirred by great truths and great visions and great

ideals and great dreams. God pity the indifferent soul. Indifference has smothered many a most promising future.

A third thing that has smothered many a human soul and kept it dormant is pure and unadulterated beastliness—a catering to the merely physical, a refusal to give the soul a chance, a resignation and a surrender to the physical in man, to the food desire and to greed for the gross.

There is only one thing that will awaken a soul from this lethargy—from this dormant condition—and that thing is the entrance of Jesus Christ into that soul. The soul is dead without Christ—but with Christ there comes a sense of glad awakening.

“And through and over everything
A sense of glad awakening.”

ILLUSTRATIONS OF GREAT AWAKENINGS

In Tolstoy’s “The Resurrection” there is a chapter called “The Awakening.” When the young lawyer discovers his sin and gives his heart to Christ and kneels down beside his bed like a little child and prays in penitence and humility there comes the Great Awakening which has become immortal in literature:

“‘O God, how beautiful! How beautiful!’ he said, meaning that which had gone on in his own soul.”

A long time ago there lived a King and a Queen who had a beautiful daughter born to them.

The King was so happy over this event that he ordered a great feast and invited everybody. There were thirteen fairies in his Kingdom but as he had only twelve golden plates one of these fairies was not invited to this feast.

When the feast was held the fairies came and each gave the little girl a gift. One gave her the gift of VIRTUE—another gave her the gift of WISDOM, a third gave her the gift of GOOD NATURE, and a fourth gave her the gift of BEAUTY.

But when eleven of the fairies had had their say the thirteenth came in, an ugly old woman, with ugly features and an ugly soul. She saw that she had not been invited to the feast and she was angry, so she told them that she would leave as her gift:

“This is my gift to the King’s daughter; in her fifteenth year she shall prick her finger with a spindle and die!”

The twelfth fairy cried out—for she had not yet given her gift to the child: “Nay! Nay! She shall not die! She shall only fall into a deep sleep!”

The King was anxious to save his child from this far-off horror and so he had all spindles abolished from the Kingdom and forgot all about the curse.

On this beautiful girl’s fifteenth birthday the King and Queen were away and a sudden wanderlust seized the growing girl. She began to search about the castle for new things to play with and for new experiences.

Suddenly in an old stone tower in the castle she came to a door that evidently had not been opened

for years. She went in and there sat an old woman busily working at a strange wheel.

"What is that?" she asked.

"That is a spindle."

"Ah!" said beautiful Briar-Rose, "I have never seen anything so merry as that. Let me play with it!"

She started to play with this spindle and suddenly it pricked her hand and she fell into a deep sleep.

Not only did she fall into a deep sleep but everybody in the Castle fell into a deep sleep. The cooks, the servants, the pigeons, the flies on the walls, the dogs and chickens and cows in the farm-yard of the palace—everything fell into a deep sleep—a trance.

Then winter settled down over that castle and ice and snow fell over it. The trees grew up around it and hedged it in until the castle was completely hidden from view. Therein lay the sleeping princess, Briar-Rose and the King and Queen and all of the court.

A hedge of thorns grew around the castle interlocking their thorns until it was impossible for anybody to get in at all.

The story of the beautiful sleeping Princess, Briar-Rose, spread far and near and attracted great attention.

From time to time Kings came and tried to fight their way into the dead castle to awaken the Princess. They could never make it and Briar-Rose slept on.

Finally a King's son of beautiful stature and of pure heart heard the story of the Frozen Castle and he said: "I shall go and release the Sleeping Princess."

They tried to stop him by telling him what fearful things had happened to all who had tried to awaken the Princess and of their horrible deaths. But he was determined to go and he went.

As he drew near he felt the icy breath from the frozen castle. He saw the tall black thorn hedge looming above him with threatening mien.

But he went on confidently and with Love in his heart and, lo! as he drew near, the thorn hedge suddenly leapt into green life and blossomed with beautiful large flowers. The perfume of these flowers was the most beautiful he had ever smelled! They parted of their own accord to let this Sir Galahad Prince through. Like the Red Sea parted to let God's children of Israel through so these thorn trees parted.

Then the snow stopped falling and ice began to melt and the flowers and grass on the castle lawns began to leap forth in their old-time splendor and beauty.

The cows and dogs and horses and pigeons, even the flies on the walls, began to feel a stir of new life and moved about.

They were all asleep as the Prince passed them, even the King and Queen. He went through this dead castle and up the winding stairs to the room where the beautiful Briar-Rose slept. When he

caught his first glimpse of her she was so beautiful that her beauty blinded his eyes.

He stooped down and gently gave her a kiss.

The moment he gave her that kiss the beautiful Princess Briar-Rose opened her eyes and awoke. Then she felt a quiver of new life run through her limbs and she arose—like earth awakening at the summons of spring.

She arose and the Prince and Princess walked down the castle stairs hand in hand. When they walked into the great hall the King and Queen awoke and the dogs and cows and pigeons and flies and servants.

It took the King of Love to awaken them all. This is the beloved story of Sleeping Beauty and the Prince.

The world was dead in sin. A wicked fairy had put the curse of sin upon the earth. All over the earth men were dead in debauchery.

Then came a good Prince—came in love and sympathy—came with a valiant spirit in his soul.

He loved this sin-steeped world and this sin-cursed world so much that he died for it. His kiss of Love was the kiss of Death to himself but Life and hope and beauty to all the world—came this good Prince Jesus Christ—came to awaken the world—came to awaken each individual that he touched to new life and beauty. He came:

“And through and over everything,
A sense of glad awakening.”

And the words of the text and the symphonic theme link themselves together in the link of love:

“I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness!”

My friend, Dr. Bangs, illustrates the theme for me:

“There is a very beautiful story told of Ole Bull, the violinist. Many years ago he was wandering through a frontier forest. In the midst of the forest he came upon a hut occupied by a hermit, who had formerly been a man in public life, but, meeting with some great sorrow and bitter disappointment, he had withdrawn from humanity and built himself this little log cabin in the wilderness. As Ole Bull pushed the door open and stepped in, he looked in wonder upon the white beard of the old hermit. On the wall of the cabin there hung a violin. After a little conversation the great musician pointed to the instrument, and asked, ‘What is that?’ The hermit said, ‘That is my violin.’ ‘Can you play?’ ‘Well, I reckon I can. I got that thirty-five years ago in London.’ ‘Would you mind playing a little?’ ‘Certainly not.’ He took the violin down and began to play as requested. The poor thing wailed ‘God Save the King,’ and shrieked ‘My Country, ’Tis of Thee’ and ‘Home, Sweet Home.’ As he lowered the violin with a self-satisfied air, Ole Bull asked, timidly, ‘Do you think I could learn to play?’ ‘Well, I do not know about you; it takes years; but I learned.’ Ole Bull took the violin and picked his way over the strings with the sweep of the great artist. He then

poured his soul into it. He played as only he could play, ‘God Save the King,’ and ‘My Country, ’Tis of Thee,’ and the ‘Carnival of Venice’ and ‘Home, Sweet Home’ until the mountains of Norway lifted their rugged summits again before his own imagination, and the streets and faces of his native city appeared again before the mind of the banished politician in the old hermit. They were melted in tears together, such was the power of that little instrument of wood and string under the sway of him who was its master.”

CHAPTER XIV

Bo's'n Bill Was an Atheist Still

MATTHEW 8:23 to end: "Lord, save us; we perish!"

SYMPHONIC SERMON THEME:

"But our bo's'n Bill was an atheist still
Ex-cept—sometimes—in the dark!"

—Alfred Noyes.

I don't remember much about Alfred Noyes' "Tales of a Mermaid Tavern." I remember having reveled in the versification and in the ghosts of old English writers who came trooping in. I remember the vividness of the movement of the narrative, but I do not remember any other lines than two. I think that from almost any of Noyes' other narrative poems I could quote a good many lines. From "Drake," "The Forest of Wild Thyme," or from "The Flower of Old Japan," I might quote until you were weary with listening, but I only remember two lines from "Tales of a Mermaid Tavern." I remember them because they stuck in my mind like a bur sticks to your clothes when it is thrown against them. I remember those two lines like one remembers the scent of a certain rose bush forever, because it seems to hurtle itself at you in some crisis of life. I remember once in Santa Cruz, sev-

eral summers ago, passing a certain rose bush. The sun had been beating down on that rose bush all morning. As I walked past it I caught such an exquisite scent of rose—rose that had been burned until it threw off its perfume in heat waves—such an exhilarating sweep of beauty, enough to intoxicate one, that I have never forgotten that day nor that town nor that yard. Out of all that yard that one rose bush lives. So out of all this long narrative poem of Noyes one couplet lives forever in my memory.

It lives, too, like some people will live in your memory. You go down town. You go to a theater. You go to France. You go East, and you see hundreds, thousands of people; and of all the thousands you saw one face stands out. It either stands out because of its ugliness, because of its horribleness, because of its beauty, or, because it had a look of unutterable loneliness. But that face stands out and you can never forget it. If you saw it in Hell or if you saw it in Heaven you would remember that face. You cannot get away from that face. Sometimes it works for good in your life and sometimes it works for bad in your life, but either way you cannot rid yourself of that face.

So these two lines, I think, because they express a certain type of man, stand out and they are the only lines which do stand out in that long narrative poem of Alfred Noyes:

“But our bo’s’n Bill was an atheist still
Ex-cept—sometimes—in the dark!”

I have found as I work among people, as I enter into their fun, their play, their moments of sorrow and their moments of tragedy that bo's'n Bill is a type of humanity. It is for this reason that he stuck in my mind and it is for this reason that I feel that he is worth talking about in this sermon. Bo's'n Bill is a type of humanity who either indifferently or purposely sneers at the church and at religion and at God and claims that he has no need for any of these things; boasts about it to his immediate circle of friends or family, but when death comes, or tragedy or storm, he turns to the church and he turns to God.

"But our bo's'n Bill was an atheist still
Ex-cept—sometimes—in the dark!"

NATIONS ARE LIKE BO'S'N BILL IN A CRISIS

France has always been known as an infidel nation. She has been a nation indifferent to the church and indifferent to God. She has been known as a pleasure-loving nation and just preceding the war even the kindest of French critics will admit that France was a nation which was throwing itself headlong into dissipation and sin.

I have read a strikingly interesting article on France in the National Geographic and it calls attention to the fact that France had taken to drinking heavy liquors at such a rate that it was appalling to the thinkers of France.

France in her lighter hours, in her hours of ease,

in her hours of sunshine and in her hours of peace when everything was going smoothly was like bo's'n Bill. She rather boasted of her atheism and of her lack of need of God. Reason was her God.

But when night came; when war laid its terribly devastating hand on France; when war took her sons and daughters by thousands; when every home had its empty chair; when every day brought its terrible casualty list; when nearly every woman in France was in black; when children saw their fathers go out in the morning and were fatherless by night, then France turned its face toward the churches and toward God.

Any person with half an eye could see this. During the war I always made it a point to walk into the churches and cathedrals in every village and city and town that I entered in France. I visited the great Cathedral at Toul many times. I visited the Cathedral at Nancy, and at Tours, and all of the many Cathedrals in Paris: The Madeleine, Notre Dame, St. Gervais, St. Chapelle and nearly always you would find them full of people; full of women praying for their loved ones; full of soldiers praying in their own way. I even went so far as to get up one morning about three o'clock. I had been told that it was a sight worth seeing, to get up in time to see the floods of workingmen that every day visited the churches and cathedrals. I did so.

I shall never forget that morning. I was out on the narrow, cobbled streets of Paris before daybreak and before the people were astir. I had to walk a mile through the dark streets to a certain cathedral

in a part of the city where thousands of working-men lived. Thousands of them were engaged in munition works. They were in danger every minute that they worked. Thousands of women and old men were engaged in occupations that might snuff them out of existence in a second. Indeed one afternoon shortly after lunch, as we were sitting in Paris chatting, there were two terrific explosions. They shook the entire city. It was a terrible sound. We immediately thought, as we did when the Big Gun began to shoot the first time, that it was a daylight air raid. We went immediately to the scene of the explosion. Five miles from the center of the city a great munition hand-grenade factory had blown up, and windows were shattered all over Paris. It was an awful sight. More than a thousand lives had been snuffed out in five seconds. These reports did not reach America for the censorship would not allow it but it was more terrible to me than any war or battle scene that I witnessed.

And so these people—who at one time had made up an infidel nation which scorned the church, God and religion—were flocking to the churches during the war, and still are. On this particular morning I found the church to which I went crowded to its limits. Priests in white robes were quietly going and coming.

Girls dressed in trousers, from the munition factories, were crowding the seats, praying. Men were hurrying in and out before going to work, asking God's care over their lives. It was an awe-inspiring sight to witness.

Hardly an afternoon could you pass the Notre Dame or the Madeleine cathedrals that constant streams of people were not going and coming in those two great churches, and the same was true of every church in France.

A nation in the time of stress and storm was turning to God as the only help in time of trouble.

Remembering the history of France and its reliance on its former God, REASON, as I watched France during the war, I said to myself over and over again, said it reverently but with a smile, with a smile half of humor, half of joy:

"Bo's'n Bill was an atheist still
Ex-cept—sometimes—in the dark!"

I do not know about England from first-hand information, nor do I know about Belgium, but I do know about the United States and I know that never did a nation turn to God as America has turned to him during the war. Never did a nation so throw itself into the doing of Christian things; things which it had scorned before; things which it had sneered at as a nation; things which it had thought to be weakness; sacrifice, tears, love, kindliness, giving, forgetting self and self interests.

I have been reading Poole's new book, "The Village," and it is a marvelously graphic picture of Russia just following the days of the first Revolution. It is a picture of Heaven on earth. One weeps to read it. The Revolution had broken. Men were being shot on every hand. Terror reigned. Ma-

chine guns were being fired up and down the streets of Petrograd. You had to bolt your doors at night. You might be halted in the darkness and the challenge shouted at you with guns at your head, "Are you for the Tsar or the people?"

This might be the Tsar's soldiers trying to trap you.

"It's all right, brothers," you might reply, and pass on.

But in spite of all of this terror and all of this killing, there was in Russia, just following the Revolution, a spirit of love, brotherhood, and kindness that never was on land or sea before, since Christ called for "Peace on Earth; Good Will to Men," says Ernest Poole. I have heard this story from two or three who happened to be in Russia at that time.

It was like a Heaven on earth. Here are some of the pictures:

"All night I heard shooting in the streets. I lay in my bed but could not sleep. The words of Pushkin came to my mind: 'Russia can never have a Revolution. Russia can only have Riot—merciless, bloody and senseless.' I did not dare to hope for anything such as an end of all the dissipation, intrigue, the stealing and cheating of war profiteers, the German cabal in the Court of the Tsar, and the tyranny of the old régime, the dark ignorance of the people. As I listened to the shots that night, I thought that in mobs and violence the slowly growing vision of over half a century would all go up in a smoky

cloud. In the next room to mine, my old mother had lighted the little lamps in front of both of her idols, and all night I could hear her on her knees, praying.

“‘O God—O Christ—our dearest brother—help our people—help them. Save them from misery—grant them success! There has been so much suffering in our land!’

“So she prayed all night long. Toward morning I had dropped to sleep and when she came to awaken me, there was a light shining in her eyes like that of an eager, happy child.

“THE REVOLUTION HAD COME. There was shooting everywhere. But the people even in the midst of their trouble were happy.

“They are all so happy,’ she said. ‘In a good, sweet way, as though each had a solemn light in his soul, as people have during Easter prayer. Everybody looked like that—people of any class—rich and poor. Absolute strangers met each other and suddenly talked like old friends. Never in all my life did I dream there could be such friendliness in the world!’ And as she spoke, there were tears in her eyes.

“I went out and tried to get news. I asked for newspapers, but people laughed. ‘What a man,’ they cried, ‘not to realize that there can be no papers now!’

“The streets were crowded with people. They looked as they do at Easter time. I heard a young girl say gayly as she hurried along, ‘Easter is very early this year!’

“And others as they passed me were singing softly:

“‘Christ is risen! Christ is risen!’

“I heard workingmen say, ‘This is no time for us to demand higher wages. Now we will work—because we are free. And until the new Russia is safe, all the wages we ask is enough to feed our children.’

“I went into a milkshop and found a strange new order there, for the customers, rich and poor alike, were going themselves to the milk cans, pouring out what they needed and putting their money on the counter, careful to leave the right amount. I grew curious and watched them close, but not one person failed to pay.”

Russia was turning to God in the moment of her terror and turning to God she was finding peace in her heart. When she got to the place where there was nothing else to do but turn to God she turned and found peace in her soul. It was a wonderful peace and if it could have been seized and organized; if it could have been made permanent; if German agencies could have been kept out of Russia; if the Devil could have been held back beyond the borders of Russia, Russia to-day would have been the Utopia of our dreams and of the dreams of Russia. For a few weeks, at least just after the Revolution, Russia was one great brotherhood.

I am told this same thing happened just following the earthquake in San Francisco. People turned to God at that time. In the midst of that awful terror of that awful morning in April, men and women

turned to God. I have talked with people who saw men and women kneeling in the streets of San Francisco, praying. I have been told of how the saloons were closed, and of how rich and poor camped in the park, cooking over the same fires, eating at the same tables or on the same grass plot, of how a great sense of brotherhood was upon everybody.

Even licentious, sinning, self-loving, pleasure-hunting San Francisco, when the earth trembled, buildings toppled, and the earth caved in, turned to God:

"But our bo's'n Bill was an atheist still
Ex-cept—sometimes—in the dark!"

INDIVIDUALS TURN TO GOD WHEN THE STORM BREAKS

An army chaplain told me the story of a typhoon at sea through which his soldiers had come. He told of how it was the worst typhoon that the transport on which they were coming from the Philippines had ever gone through. He told of how the Captain had given the ship up as lost. He told of how the men of the Thirteenth, the toughest regiment that ever cussed, had gotten down on their knees and prayed and that men who had done that—but that is far enough to go. The rest of what he said has nothing to do with my illustration. The fact was, that when the typhoon struck the ship and the Captain had given her up for lost and those thousands of soldiers had come face to face with death at the bottom of

the sea they did the same thing that bo's'n Bill would have done. They did the same thing that nations have always done. They did the same thing that cities have always done; they did the same thing that individual human beings throughout all time and over all the earth have done: **THEY TURNED THEIR FACES TO GOD.** They forgot that they had sneered at God and at his church and at religion. They were no longer unbelievers. They were not even doubters any more. They believed with all their hearts **THAT THE ONLY POWER THAT COULD SAVE THEM WAS GOD!**

"But our bo's'n Bill was an atheist still
Ex-cept—sometimes—in the dark!"

A boy told me in France, in a hospital, of his experience along this line. He said, "I never cared much for the church. I never went. On Sunday I had the time of my life. It wasn't a time that did me any good either. I sneered at religion and the people who went to church and at all that the church stands for. But out there in No-Man's-Land, as I was layin' on my back with a bullet through my head and one through my arm, it was different. I lay there all night and all the next day. I expected to die. I couldn't move and the stretcher-bearers went by two or three times and missed me. They thought I was dead, I guess. I didn't ever expect to get back to our lines alive. I expected to die right there. Then I got to thinking. I got to thinking what a fool I'd been to scorn the church and God and re-

ligion. I'm not ashamed to tell you that now, for it was about the realest thing that ever happened in my life. When I was actually buck up against death, religion and the church and things like that didn't seem so darned foolish as I'd always thought they was. Then I want to tell you that I prayed. I didn't know much how to pray. I remembered a little about it, because my old mother used to pray for us boys at home. I don't suppose my prayin' was much like God had ever heard before; but I prayed. That is the thing. I prayed! God, how earnestly I prayed! I promised God that if he would get me out of that hole I'd be his forever! And, by God, I'm going to be too, Sir!"

I tell it to you in his own language as nearly as I can remember it. It was such earnest language. His face burned as he talked. He was pale for he had been through Hell, and I shall never forget that last phrase of his. It rings in my ears with the war long since over and peace come: "And, by God, I'm going to be too, Sir!" It didn't shock me. It thrilled me. It made me want to laugh and cry at the same time. But what I did was to kneel with that boy and pray a prayer of thankfulness that when he had found life in the midst of death he had also found God.

"But our bo's'n Bill was an atheist still
Ex-cept—sometimes—in the dark!"

But we don't have to go to France to get illustrations to support the general principle underlying

what I am trying to say. We saw a dozen illustrations of it during the flu epidemic.

I know of one particular man who was face to face with death. Worse than that, his own child was face to face with death. I had known this fine fellow for a number of years. He had always been a so-called atheist. But when Death came brazenly into his home and threatened to take from him that which was more than life to him; when Death, with clanking feet, cold breath, and ruthless, clutching, bony fingers reached over and took hold of the throat of his baby and choked and choked and choked; and when that little baby's breath came in rattles—then that man did the thing that every man on earth has always done if he has had the chance. And verily I believe that a real father or a real mother, no matter how indifferent they have been to God or to his church before, when they see their children in the clutch of death will turn to God quicker than when they themselves face death. And that dear fellow, of course, sent for the preacher. And the preacher considered it a great privilege to go. The preacher went. As he entered the house, that man who didn't know before that he believed in anything jumped from his own bed in spite of the fact that he was seriously sick and put his arms about the preacher.

The preacher thought of a picture that he had seen so many times. It is a picture that impressed itself upon his boyhood mind. It was hanging in an old, bare, Sunday School room. It is the picture of a Cross out in the ocean. Not a sight of land any-

where. The storm is beating and the waves are running high. But the cross is founded on a rock and it stands so high out of the sea that the storm does not reach it. Even the birds of the sea are hovering around it, as if for safety from the terrible storm that is raging. At the bottom of the Cross a beautiful girl is clinging with her arms about it. She has evidently been cast overboard from some ship that has been sunk. She has been beaten about by the waves and the storms of life without hope, until the Cross appeared. Then she managed to reach the foot of the Cross.

And there she clings in the picture.

And so this dear fellow threw his arms about the preacher and the preacher was glad to have him do it, even if he did have the flu. He cried, "Oh, Doc, I'm so glad you've come!"

And then he asked—even before the preacher had a chance to say a word—that he pray. And that sick man himself knelt down beside the bed and prayed as the preacher prayed.

And the preacher remembered that man's scorn of the church and of God, but he did not remember it unkindly. He remembered it only as a characteristic of humankind. He remembered it only as God remembers it, with joy in his heart, that at least, even though it is in the face of death, men do turn to him; nations do turn, cities do turn, to the only refuge.

And God must have smiled when he saw that scene. He must have smiled to think of the boasting of bo's'n Bill when the skies were calm and clear.

He must have smiled as a father smiles to see his child at last in need of him.

I think that one of the sweetest experiences that a father has is that of seeing his child have need of him. I know a little lady who is overly independent. I know of a little lady who wants to be a big lady and who scorns the aid of her daddy or her mother most of the time. She plays and plays all day and is never tired. If Daddy wants to help her, that help is refused with a haughty shake of the head and a rather insistent statement that "I'm a big girl and can help myself."

Then night comes, and the little legs are tired and as the automobile stops in the garage, a tired voice says, "Carry me, Daddy! Carry me, Daddy!"

And it is a good feeling to a daddy to have little arms about him; and it is a good feeling to a daddy's body, no matter how strong or how tired that body may be, to have the feel of little legs about it. I think Daddies and Mothers get to waiting through hours, and perhaps through years of thoughtless indifference, until children are tired or hurt or dying, and then their hearts beat with a new eagerness when these children turn to them in their hour of need.

And so it is with God.

No matter how long his children have been indifferent to him; no matter how long they have scorned him; no matter how long they have felt that they didn't need him; no matter how far they have wandered from him; God of love, how His heart

leaps to meet them when they cry out in their need. His heart runs to meet them like a bride runs to meet her husband; like a Mother runs to meet her son who has just come home from war.

Bishop Quayle has an expression in a prayer which comes to me whenever I think of the bo's'n Bills of life. I thought of it when that boy told me his story in France. I thought of it when I read the Noyes couplet. I thought of it when I saw indifferent, atheistic France in wartime turn to God. I thought of it when I received a telephone call once to go to San Francisco to bury the wife of a business man who never goes to church; and I thought of it when the dear fellow called me into his home where Death was waiting to take his child; I thought of it in connection with his throwing his arms about me and asking me to pray. I thought of it as I thought of that picture of the cross in the stormy sea and the girl clinging to the foot of it, and that expression is:

"There is room at the foot of the cross for all."

And, thank God, there is room at the foot of the cross for all; room for those who, when skies were clear, were indifferent.

I received a letter once that sums up all that I am trying to say. It is a little picture out of everyday life. It is a letter from a business man with whom I have had dealings. I have been dealing with him for a good many years and we have been good friends. I have often asked him why he didn't go to church and he has always said: "Oh, we never

go to church!" In fact while he never sneered at the church he was absolutely the most indifferent man that I ever met.

Then one day came a telephone call. His wife had died. He was in great need. His voice broke over the phone as he called me. He said that I was the only preacher that he knew; would I come to San Francisco to conduct the funeral services of his wife? I had known her also in the office of this business firm and we had been good friends; but she too had been indifferent to religious things. I drove up one Saturday afternoon and considered it a great privilege in the name of my Christ to conduct the funeral service of this dear girl, precious in the eyes of Christ although she was indifferent to him all her life.

I received a letter after the funeral and it reads: "Permit me at this time to express my thanks to you for holding services at the funeral of my dear wife.

"You responded with such sincerity that it is gratifying to me to know and see just how my wife was liked by you and other friends.

"Your friendship during my sorrow is the kind that money cannot buy, and what pleased me most is the knowledge that I have, that if my dear wife could speak now, she would say that she desired nothing so much as your presence at her bier."

Another experience of life's events:

A big, fine looking, manly, red-headed boy came into my office. He was in deep sorrow. His mother had passed away.

His grief was pitiful to see. It is always more heart-breaking to see the grief of a boy or a man than anything else. He was all broken up over her death.

I said to him: "Why, my boy, you have much to be happy over for your dear mother said to me the last time I talked with her, 'Oh, Dr. Stidger, my children are so good to me!'"

Then the tears came into his eyes.

We sat for a while without speaking. As he thought of his dear mother he seemed so alone in the world. Then his mind went back like a flash to a refuge and he said, "I used to come to this church all the time. I was in Mr. Lean's class."

In his trouble his mind went flashing back to the church. He had not been coming to church for a long time but he has never forgotten. In his hour of grief his mind shot back like a flash to the church of his early boyhood and to the church of his dear mother.

Yes, there's room at the foot of the cross for all; and none are turned aside even though they do not come until the storm beats and death faces them; and all hope seems gone. The cross rears its white form out of the sea of life, no matter how storm-tossed that sea may be.

Going out of the Golden Gate just where the Japanese steamer sunk some years ago with all on board, just where the rocks are jutting their wicked peaks highest, there where the waves are never still, just where men will need guidance most, when the fog settles down, and the storm beats, somebody has

reared a white cross on a rock there at the edge of the Golden Gate. It is a beautiful thing when the sun shines upon it and the skies are blue; but it is more beautiful when the fog comes rolling in and the storms beat.

There is always a cross in the midst of the storms of life. There is always a cross when the waves beat high. There is always a cross where the crowded ways of life are turbulent with sorrow and hopelessness; and that Cross is the Church and that Cross is the everlasting love of the Christ; and there is always, and eternally, room at the foot of the Cross for all.

Last evening I picked up a paper especially to see the account of the death of Dr. B., but as I glanced over it and saw the headlines telling of the death toll in the camps of "our boys" from this epidemic, my heart sank within me. It seemed to me almost as if "Our Father" had deserted his world and that our nation's efforts to help the oppressed were not being blessed and that it was all in vain. But this morning I remembered that "he spared not his own Son," but that "the Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through suffering," and I remembered who it was that cried out, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

We know not why there is this "hiding of his power," but we do know that we can trust him where we cannot understand, and rejoice that he has not left us without something to touch in the dark.

"Something to touch in the dark." This expres-

sion I heard first from my boy Eddie when he was only a little fellow between two and three years old, I think. One night I was putting him to bed, I had sung his favorite song, "Mary had a little lamb," and he had said his little prayer and I was about to leave him to go to sleep, when he said: "Papa, give me something." "Give you what, Eddie?" and his answer was: "Give me something to touch in the dark."

So all of us want "something to touch in the dark," when midnight comes, and storms beat about us, and danger and death press us closely. Out in No-Man's-Land we wanted "something to touch in the dark." When sickness grips our loved ones and we are terror stricken at the thought of losing them, we want "something to touch in the dark." We want Christ, we want the Cross, we want God's hand in ours.

We may be like bo's'n Bill in the noontime, when the sun is high, and the birds sing, and life is full of boisterous laughter, but alone, in the midnight hours, we want "something to touch in the dark."

Like the poor frightened disciples on storm-tossed, turbulent, tumultuous Galilee we cry out:

"Lord! Save us! We perish!"

For it might be said of us all with truth:

"But our bo's'n Bill was an atheist still
Ex-cept—sometimes—in the dark!"

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